

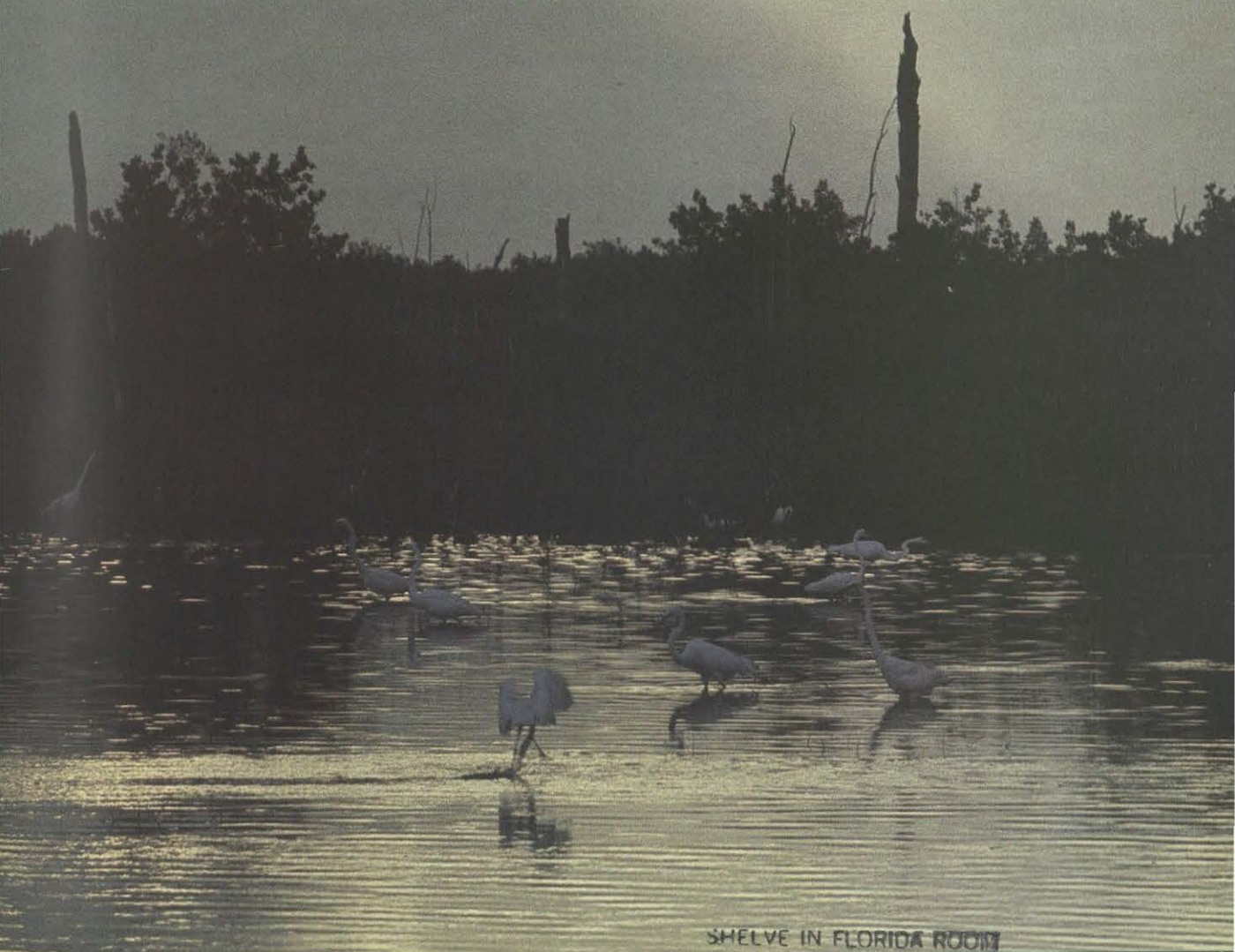
FLORIDA WILDLIFE

July-August 1983

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OF FLORIDA



SHELVE IN FLORIDA ROOM



THE MAN WHO BREAKS A GAME LAW IS GUILTY OF MORE THAN ONE OFFENSE

Game laws, whether they involve season dates, bag limits, shooting hours or the like, aren't just a set of paper rules and regulations. They're a vital element in overall management efforts to maintain healthy and abundant wildlife populations.

Moreover, the hunter who violates game regulations disregards not only the law but also one of the basic principles of ethical hunting.

Consider that it was turn-of-the-century sportsmen who, in order to curb the

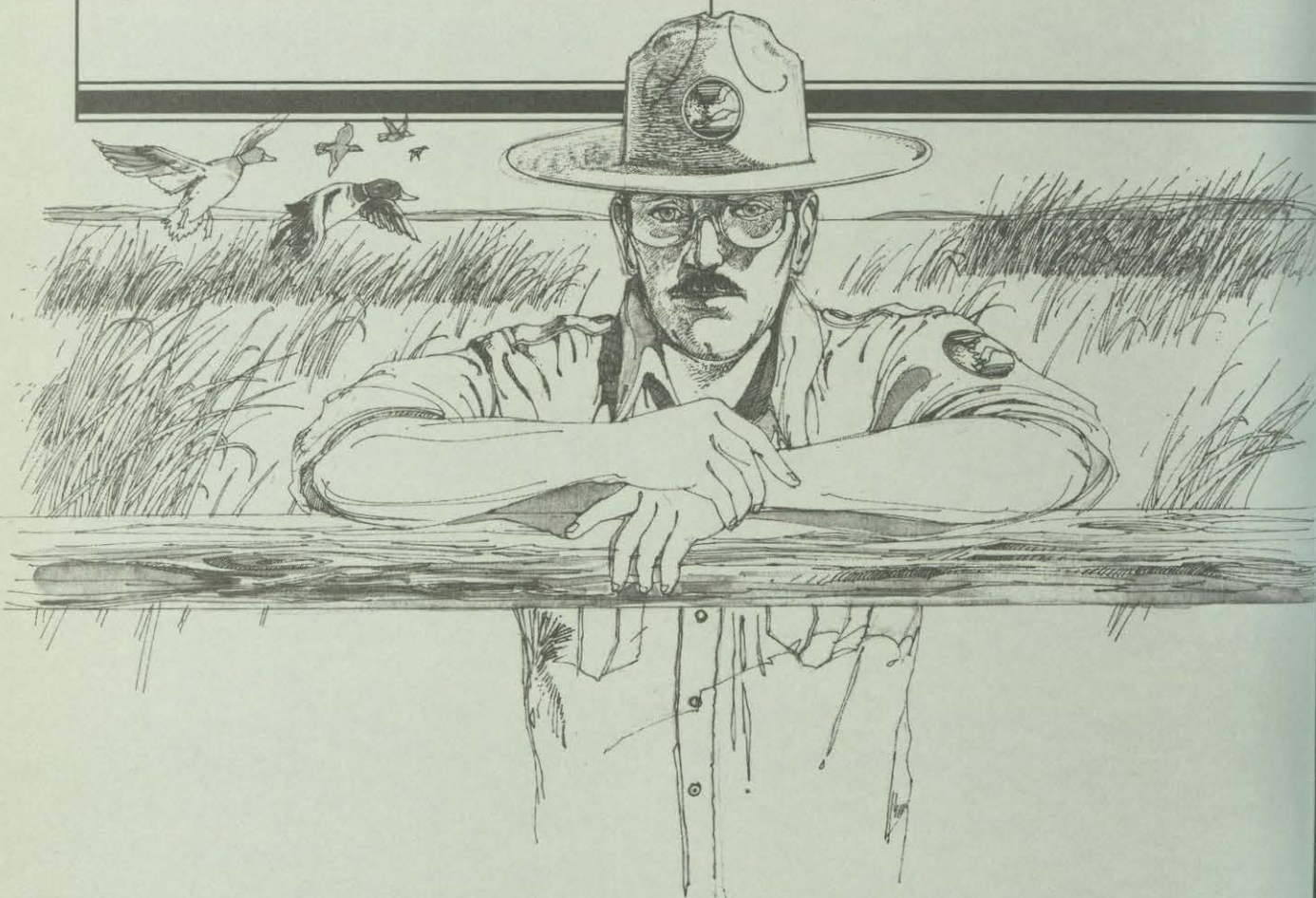
commercial exploitation of wildlife, were the driving force in establishing our nation's first game laws.

Today, leadership in wildlife conservation and a deep commitment to the principles of fair chase continue to be at the heart of our tradition of ethical hunting.

As a sportsman, this is your heritage. Don't abuse it.



National Shooting Sports Foundation
1075 Post Road
Riverside, Conn. 06878



FLORIDA WILDLIFE

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Dedicated to the appreciation
and enjoyment of our
wildlife heritage, and to a
fuller understanding of efforts
directed toward the
protection, restoration,
enhancement and wise use of
our natural resources.

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THE COVERS

Dawn over Everglades National Park—Lynn Stone captures that moment betwixt and between on the front cover. He also is responsible for capturing the bond between boy and dog in "Fishing Buddies" on the back.



Art by Sam Westbrook

Do Fishermen Lie?

by Les Alexander

Sam Jenkins is the patriarch of a clan of old salts who collect on a marina porch in the Keys and spin yarns to their fellow Florida sea rovers.

Rubbing his grizzled beard, his seamed face squinty eyed from years of sun and spray, he was a venerable Neptune, a billboard character popping aluminum 12-ouncers of the stuff that made Milwaukee famous.

"How many eyes do a oyster have?" he grunted on this particular occasion.

I was immediately alert. Whenever the winter breakers roll in on the beach with a northeastern bone in their white, wide teeth, I have a yen for parking my carcass to listen to fisherfolk. It sometimes shocks my honest upbringing to hear their fanciful tales of derring-do on the broad expanse of waters, but it's a delightful pastime. Sam Jenkins was pushing 70 summers mighty hard and his cronies on the porch were collected in mutual pity at being undone by nature.

Bert Semple complained, "Sam, you know there ain't no oysters got eyes!"

Bert, in his late 40s, lean as a bamboo outrigger with as many knobs, is Sam's mate on the charterboat *Runaway*.

"Ha!" cracked Sam. "That shows just how much young'uns know nowadays." He punctuated his remark with a minor explosion from a pop-top, fulfilling his commitment to the local recycling program.

The rest of us lining the porch, including a couple of Yankee tourists entranced by this drama of local color, were excited eyewitnesses of what we knew would be an entertaining confrontation.

Bert shored up his defenses. "You ain't goin' to tell me oysters has eyes, an' git away with it." He spat derisively. His trajectory was outward. The saliva sailed like a two-masted schooner in the brisk breeze, then kicked up a spurt of sand when it ran aground.

Sam stabbed his index finger at his mate, aiming it like a spear gun at a shark.

"You remember," he recounted in a gravelly voice, "where Charlie Chin's Seafood Palace used to be 'fore the '58 hurricane took it to heaven?"

"Yumm," Bert nodded in the affirmative, transfixing his interrogator with a wary look. "I recollect somethin' 'bout it. That don't mean oysters has eyes."

"You wait'll I tell it," Sam insisted with all the authority of a captain on a quarterdeck. A reminiscent gleam shone in his eyes, and he tugged at his cap. "I tell you—" and we knew he was speaking to all of us, "that was some fancy pants place in those days, out on that pretty oyster bar." Sam pulled a suspender away from his chest as though to make room for another swig, which he promptly took. "It went way out to deep water along the pass. Old Chinaman Charlie," he mused, his tone elevating to a steady hum, "he had it made. When business was good, all he had to do was tong that bar for the fattest, sweetest oysters this side of Apalachee." He fortified himself with a small but piquant libation.

"About them oyster eyes...."

Sam shushed Bert with a stony glare.

"Well, now," Sam began again at a spanking speed, "when that hurricane was coming, Charlie was battening down about the same time I was idling up the channel on low water, headin' for the Hole to ride 'er out. Right then was the minute I got that dang surprise." His eyes rolled while his body shifted like a vessel swinging at anchor. "As I come across the sandbar at the entrance, right alongside I seen this old red bass, the biggest cussed scutter that could possibly be. It was so big, I had my doubts there was such a creecher."

Bert cleared his throat, but dared not interrupt.

Sam went on, rolling his tongue in his cheek like a quid, "I thought fer a moment it was a shark lazying along. Just as I passed the oyster reef, Charlie come out on the porch. You know, the one he called the Cap'n's Deck. I looked up just in time to see him dump a brand new pot of seafood sauce. He scraped it out an' tapped the spoon on the railing. Dang if it wasn't laced with horseradish so strong I could smell it if I'd been 30 furlongs away. He knew the electricity would go off in the hurricane, an' it would spoil."

"C'mon, Sam," Bert broke in. "Git at it!"



Sam admonished him again with a forefinger. "Now, just shut up, partner, till I finish. When Charlie threw out the stuff, it started downtide. When it went over the oyster flat, them slimy critters popped open their shells and stood up. They spun around to all points of the compass and ended up east by northeast. I know dern well they were lookin'. That's why I asked, how many eyes do a oyster have?"

Bert snorted.

Sam added emphatically, "That ain't all. That old bass took a single look, puffed out his gills and inhaled. I swear he took on the size of a killer whale. Peeled about half a mile of scared oysters and another batch of Charlie's special sauce right off that reef!"

"Sam," his friend interposed, but Sam stayed him with a wave of his wrinkled hand.

"When I'm done, you can take over the main deck, the poop, and the forec'stle." His chin slid across a frayed cuff before he continued. "Next thing I knowed, I seen big bubbles popping to the surface, way up the creek. I am dang sure what they were. I figure that bass got a real hard bellyache!"

Laughs rippled all the way down the porch. The sound was like loose sails flapping in a gale.

"Sam!" Bert screeched, as though we were personally being made a fool of. "You know that ain't true! We ain't crazy enough to believe it!"

"I was there and you wasn't..." his voice trailed away while his eyes widened, as though he saw a spectre. He extended a shaking finger toward the channel where an enormous bubble, then another, broke the surface.

"Well, I'll be hung high," he exclaimed. "That poor bass has worser indigestion than I thought!"

Every eye was drawn to the spot.

Probably I was the only one who saw a 10-foot manatee, an old sea cow, roll further upstream. They are airbreathers and they swallow great quantities which are let out as air is used.

I peered closely at Sam. If he knew the truth, he was adept at manufacturing a pious, unbelieving look that masked his face. On closer inspection, I detected what could have been a slip up, when his left eye drooped suspiciously. I was halfway certain I saw a flicker at the corner of his mouth which might have been a grin, masterfully suppressed.

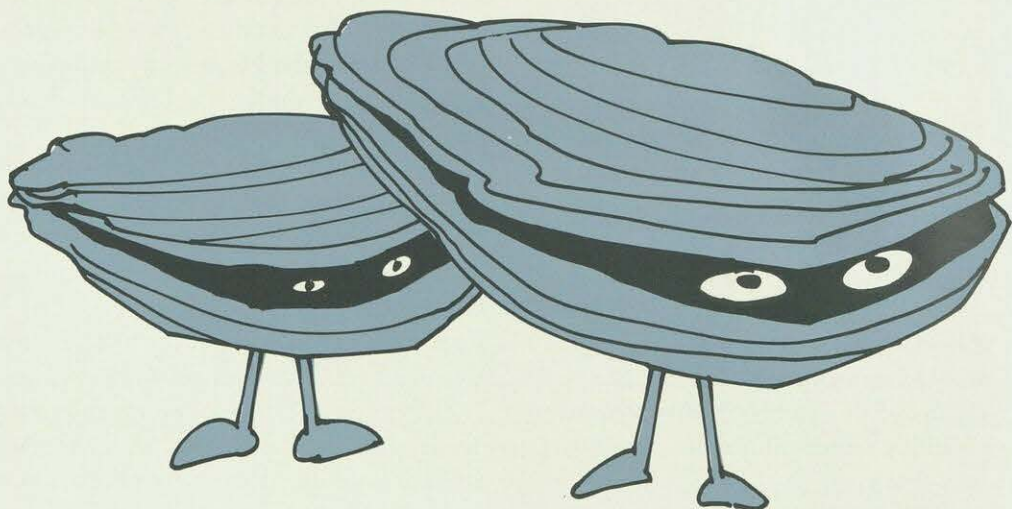
Bert, speechless, spat wildly.

It was the starting gun for a mad scramble by the Yankee tourists.

One was scooting under a high-priced station wagon to hunt for his drop-kicked keys. He was half in and half out, making strange gurgling noises that, under any other conditions, would have chilled my blood.

His companion was trying to tear the rear window open with his bare hands.

Inside the vehicle was the finest looking set of fishing rods that ever saw the Gulf Stream. □



Art by Sam Westbrook



GFC File Photo

July in the 'Glades

by Biff Lampton

Education Officer Supervisor
Everglades Region

July in the Everglades. But this July is different. This July there are no protestors, no hunters and television cameramen. This July in the Everglades is "normal."

Normal? What is normal in the Everglades? This winter and spring, record downpours kept the water levels high. Fawns born in February and March faced awesome problems in their struggle to become adults.

Wading bird rookeries in both Everglades Wildlife Management Area and Everglades National Park were threatened by high water. Even the alligators suffered as water flooded their nests.

Media attention on the "plight of the Everglades" shifted south from the management area to the

National Park as park personnel appeared before the South Florida Water Management District Board, pleading for modifications in water policies.

They stated the bird populations, dependent upon low water during the nesting season, have plunged by 90 percent since the late 1950s.

The press screamed that the Everglades was dying.

So the controversy that is today's Everglades continues. Only the current topic of conservation changes and shifts like the winds that bend the sawgrass. Today it's birds, tomorrow it will likely once more be deer.

It's a controversy that likely won't go away because far too many interests view the Everglades in different ways, each advocating uses suited to their

special needs.

The agriculturalist views the Everglades as a dumping ground for the water he must rid himself of if his sugarcane, fruit or vegetable crop is to be harvested. When he needs water, he sees the 'Glades as a likely source.

The everyday resident of the urban Gold Coast knows little of the Everglades, other than the fact that it's out there...somewhere. His kind continues to increase in south Florida and he demands water when the tap's handle is turned.

The hunter considers the Everglades a place to escape. Perhaps more than any other, he knows the 'Glades for what it once was and now is.

The fisherman looks to the 'Glades as a source of bass and bluegill and, like the quarry he seeks, he

concentrates around the spillways where the water flows deep.

Armchair environmentalists, many of whom have never really discovered the Everglades, lament present uses and policies, echoing the newspaper editorialists who likewise know little of the ecosystem called the Everglades.

For every action, there is an opposite reaction, or so science teaches. The controversy of last July and the continuing controversy of this July have highlighted that fact.

It's July in the Everglades once again. And this July is "normal." Perhaps this July and at the expense of the deer of last July, the real issues will be thoroughly investigated and next July can truly become "normal." □

In July of 1982, protestors such as these two swarmed onto the Everglades in opposition to the emergency hunt.



GFC File Photo



What Makes A Lure A Hit?

If 10 million fishermen fished every day with a shoehorn, it would become a leading fish catcher. How much the popularity of individual lures depends on fish appeal and how much on fisherman appeal can never be known.

The jig, a tool of saltwater sports and commercial fishermen for years, became a staple of fresh water only some 30 years ago and, when it first showed up in numbers, it came with different names. Remember when nearly all of Florida's freshwater jigs were called *No Alibis* because that was the maker who had a head start in the business? A little farther north they were using *Doll Flies*, a different shaped jig, but a jig nevertheless.

The *Flatfish* and its imitations, said to have been sold in more numbers than any other lure, was basically a northern bait at one time and trout fishermen I talked to had no idea it was also working on black bass. It has been best known as a cast and trolled deep-goer, but it's caught lots of bass on the surface. I've watched it.

I remember the *Doofer*, a surface bass plug that didn't catch on with fishermen very well and faded away. After that, there were Doofer fanatics for a time pawing through dusty Florida corners for any that might be left.

I recall a good seller that faded from Florida when its manufacturer (from a northern state) quit fishing here and stopped pushing it.

These stories make you wonder just how many world beaters never got out of garages or kitchens where they were designed. And many lures remain localized geographically despite national advertising. Go into a new area and the baits tend to be new, too. Even if they have the same designs as those back home, they're likely to have different names.

Bass tournaments probably spread baits faster than any other activity, including paid advertising. It doesn't follow that every bait making it big on the professional tour is better than some that are never heard of—but the winners have to be good.

For every thousand new baits that don't make it big at first, there will be one or two that strike it rich in a brand new territory—and sometimes with a fish

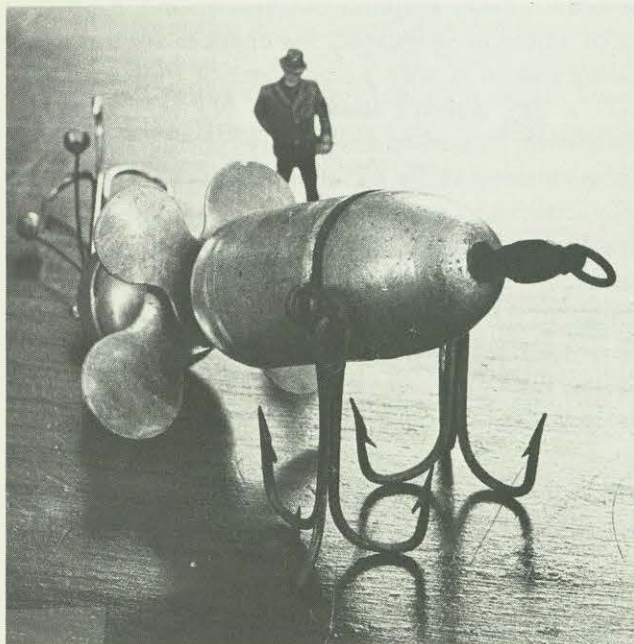
and method the designer never intended. One of the most popular of the Atlantic saltwater spoons began as a freshwater trout lure in the West. An airline captain, who owned a North Carolina coastal tackle shop, brought one back to try and business boomed when it developed as a saltwater killer that was easy to cast.

"When I first bought one out West, I don't think the fellow who made it had ever seen a saltwater fish," the captain told me a couple of years after the bait took hold.

There are a very few designs that were made almost 100 years ago that are still in use. Nearly all of the current favorites have appeared within the past 25 years, or are modifications of the old ones. Some of the more ornate models of another time are too expensive to build now.

How good were the really old ones? No one tries them enough to find out and they tend to become collectors' items, sometimes bringing chuckles instead of bass.

Charles Waterman



One of the more complex of the old bass baits was this Shakespeare "Revolution" lure, circa 1902.

On Fishing Guides

Despite efforts to tint them all with the same brush, fishing guides are pleasant, grouchy, patient, irritable, generous and grasping, the same as the rest of us. Fishermen who employ them are likely to be outspoken in their criticism and can be right or wrong about that.

It's popular to say that no guide ever retired rich, but that's not true either. Most of them don't though, even as you and I. On some waters, fresh or salt, you pay in advance and, if the weather is completely impossible, you get your money back. On other waters, the guide keeps the money.

Then there's the case where conditions are terrible, but the guide goes down to the boat anyway, pretty sure you can't make the trip.

"I was ready to go," he says. "You're the one who cancelled out." He keeps your money.

I hesitate to use dollar figures because of the extreme discrepancy between operating costs from one part of Florida to another, and from one kind of boat to another. But let's say a freshwater bass guide, who uses live bait and a moderately priced skiff with a medium-sized outboard motor, charges \$100 a day. If he catches his own bait, one of them told me, he spends about half a day in the bait business for every two days after bass.

It would be a miracle if such an operator could be booked for every available day year-round. Regardless of where he is located, the chances are that his guiding season is only a small part of the year and \$100 a day doesn't look very big in the final breakdown. In some parts of salty Florida, there are guides running skiffs for around \$200 a day, generally with short seasons and often with long, daily trips. In Alaska, where fishing is only a brief summer interlude, fishing is likely to be as expensive as hunting in Africa.

I had a friend who sent a bundle in advance to Alaska, then checked out on the trip and lost the whole works—price of a good used car—but I can't blame the guide service. Most of those who ask for large deposits do so with regret, but through necessity. Some of them will send your money back if they are able to fill the dates you vacated. This last is more than fair.

This advance payment business is a sore spot, viewed unhappily by both guides and clients. When you realize the airlines operate on a planned basis of many estimated no-shows who have reservations,

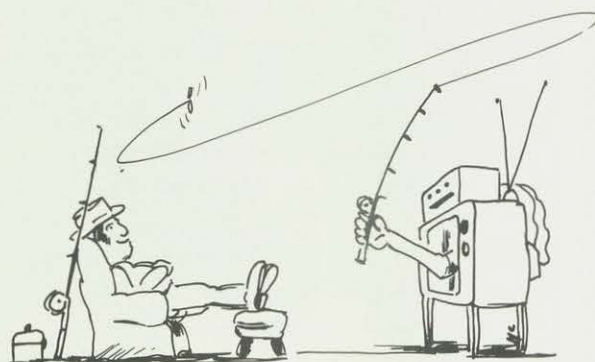
you see the necessity for advance payment in the guide business—or at least large deposits.

"I can always cancel," is a philosophy that can be bad news for the small operator—and we have to call guides "small operators," no matter how much money they make, for they are handling their clients a few at a time.

My ears burn when I think of things I have done to guiding friends of mine, all with good intentions. I have, of course, directed them to some good business too, but the debacles are what stand out in memory. My last dirty trick worked last spring when I engaged a top bass guide for some old friends from out of state whom I hadn't seen for many years. Everybody was good friends. No deposit.

Then came a death in one angler's family. What are you going to do? The guide took the rap. Too late for another party.

Guides are people. They don't all look alike, act alike, or feel alike. If they're not businessmen, they aren't at it for long.



Fishing by VCR

Fishing instruction by video tape is not new, but just now it seems to be grabbing hold. This sort of thing had to wait for enough equipment to show them and that problem seems to be solving itself rapidly.

A Florida concern, JH Productions, was presenting four tapes on fly fishing the last I heard, featuring Mary Beth and Wilhelm Luscombe, probably the best known of all producers of saltwater flies. They're now branching into freshwater fly fishing and run their Die Werke International Fly Tackle Shop in Deland.

The tapes include one on casting instruction, and three on the intricacies of fly tying for both fresh and salt water. They've originated both techniques and tackle. These tapes can be had for home use in VHS or BETA format and cost \$69.95 each, about typical for such a 45-minute presentation.

Electric Motors

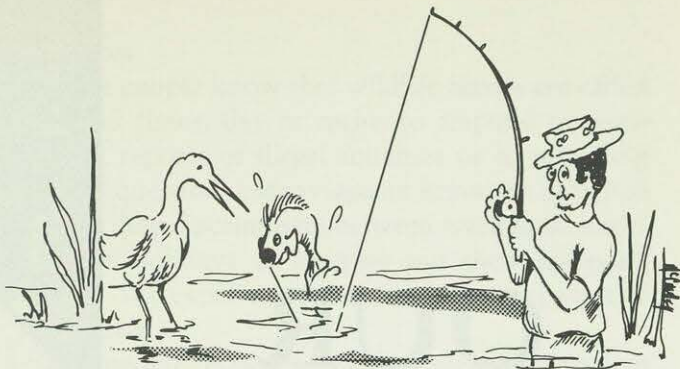
Electric motors, which have made it so hard on the paddle-and-oar business in recent years, have a reputation for not scaring fish. They're now widely used by flats fishermen who find they can get to tarpon—and sometimes bonefish or permit—faster and quieter than they can with push poles. Maybe there will be a generation of fishermen who can't pole, paddle or push.

With all of this, it may be heresy to hint that we might be using electric motors too much at the wrong time. A bass guide was telling me recently that he's found instances when the electric motor can turn bass off. When working shiners over shallow water, he found the electric propeller stirred up silt to the point that bass were turned off—or moved. It took oars to catch the fish. Anglers working with bedding fish usually use poles.

I've seen a shallow shoreline ruined, temporarily, by a misused electric in the bow of the boat. Came on a fishy area with a bow-mounted electric and I could see the mud clouds rolling up before I could finish casting over the spot. We were in very close, using light lures for bluegills.

Some of the more potent electrics can do the job from the stern, even though the accepted bass fisherman's way is to use a "pulling" electric which maneuvers better. Flats guides use their motors from the stern and mount two of them there. When an electric has enough power to work from the transom, it can generally keep the bow of the boat ahead of any disturbance it makes.

Charles Waterman



High Water Impact

What will be the long-term result of the very high water of last spring? There's no precedent to go by. Most followers of the scene feel the overall effect will be good and can't think of any lasting harm to fishing, either fresh or salt. There should be immediate improvement in the freshwater scene. Probably most interesting of all is the prophesy that there's now room for new prospecting. Places that haven't produced for a long time could be good now in both rivers and lakes. Some of the new spots to be discovered possibly haven't been fishy for a generation. Lots of water at a strange time of year.

The jarring impact of high water was emphasized by reports that wading birds south of Okeechobee were taking a beating—not only in destruction of normal nesting sites but in the scattering of food supplies. The mathematics for both a heron and a man with a rod can be pretty bumfoozling. For example, when an acre of river, channel or lake becomes several hundred acres of water, the fish supply is diluted, to say the least.

In early spring, there were fishermen catching bass over what had once been fields. Newly covered bottom has proved highly fertile and persistent flooding at an unusual time of year can give an effect similar to a newly filled impoundment.

Letting 'Em Go

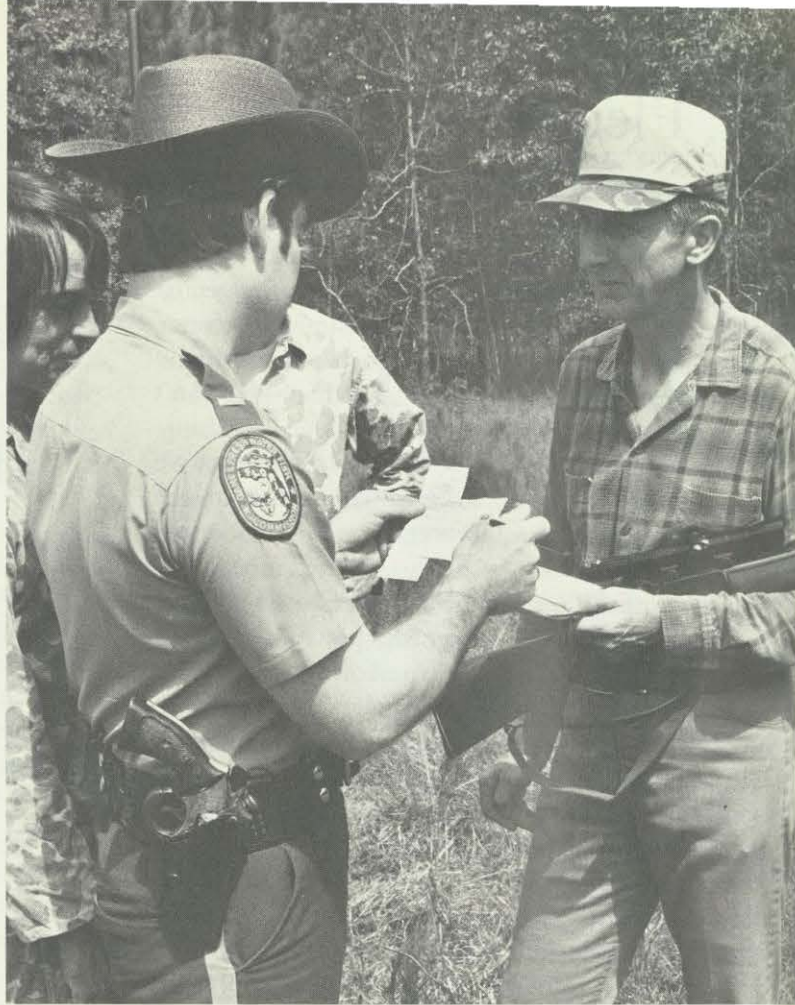
Some guides report a willingness of fishermen to release black bass. This is nice news, even though bass fishermen don't seem likely to compete with northern trout fishermen in catch and release.

There's a catch to it. Turnbackers tend to be people who already have all the fish they need. □

OUR DEBT

By Frank Lockard
Game Director

Reprinted from *Washington Wildlife*



This past January, Claude Dallas Jr., was sentenced to prison for the January 1981 fatal shootings of two Idaho conservation officers.

Like many fish and wildlife people throughout the country, I was shocked by the shootings and dismayed by the jury's decision to reduce the charges to manslaughter.

The basic facts of the case were never in dispute. The two fish and game agents, Bill Pogue and Conley Elms, had gone to the trapper's camp to arrest him for poaching. Dallas shot them with a handgun. Then, as they lay on the ground, he got a .22-caliber rifle from his tent and shot them again in the back of the head. He dragged Elms' body by mule and dumped it in a river; he took Pogue's body to northern Nevada, where he buried it in a shallow grave.

Dallas was a fugitive for 16 months before he was caught by three heavily armed teams of FBI agents near Paradise Hill, Nevada.

The 10-woman, two-man jury believed Dallas' self-defense claim, despite testimony to the contrary by the only other eyewitness. They would have acquitted him, the foreman said after the trial, had Dallas not used "excessive force" in shooting the two officers in the head after they were down. They settled for a finding of manslaughter.

Dallas might have been sentenced to death if he had been convicted of first-degree murder. As it turned out, he was sentenced to 30 years in prison and could be eligible for parole in less than 10 years.

In sentencing him, Judge Edward Lodge said Dallas' actions and statements made to a key prosecution witness indicated the shootings were "premeditated...totally unjustified...and morally reprehensible." He pointed out that Dallas had expressed little remorse about the killings or about ruining the lives of the officers' families.

"I do not believe the issue of self-defense arose at Bull Camp," the judge said. "My judgment is you drew the firearm because you did not want to be taken in. You could do that because they did not know you were armed."

Public reaction to the trial, verdict and sentencing has been mixed. Based on letters to local newspapers, many people were disappointed in the verdict. But others showed a surprising lack of understanding and empathy for the dead officers.

It's difficult to question or criticize the jury's decision in the Dallas case without having been present. But it would appear that, as one observer said, "The slain officers were on trial, not the accused killer."

It's disturbing to realize that some people see

wildlife agents only as authority figures with badges and guns, with no compassion or sense of responsibility. It's a description that didn't fit officers Pogue and Elms, and it doesn't fit any wildlife agent I know.

Wildlife agents are dedicated public servants who, by their own choice, represent a profession that is more easily criticized than any other I know. Like biologists and most other game agency employees, these people entered their profession primarily because of their interest in, and concern about, our fish and wildlife resources. Believe me, they're not doing it for the money. These capable people could double their salaries in many other types of employment.

Today's wildlife agents are much more than enforcement officers. It's true that they are charged with a great deal of responsibility for the enforcement of game and fish laws, and they are highly trained to do so. Yet these same people work closely with schools, sportsmen's clubs, conservation groups and the public at large toward the achievement of our common goals of resource appreciation and protection.

Fish and wildlife law enforcement is a challenging and noble profession. However, the wildlife agent's effectiveness does not rest solely upon his own dedication and training. It depends even more upon the attitudes and behavior of society. No one likes laws, rules or regulations, particularly when they are enforced, and more particularly, when we are the subjects of that enforcement.

But, after all, we expect public employees to do their jobs, and we should respect the jobs they are trying to do. Without the understanding and support of the public, they can not effectively fulfill their roles as custodians of the state's fish and wildlife

resources.

Most people know that wildlife agents are called on at all times, day or night, to respond to complaints, reports of illegal activities or to just plain answer questions. Many agents know no schedule nor do they discriminate between weekdays, weekends or holidays in carrying out their responsibilities. We expect it of them and, they expect it of themselves.

Few people recognize that the inherent dangers in being a wildlife agent are much the same as those for a city policeman, county sheriff, state patrolman or any other law enforcement officer. Every day, with each assignment or routine patrol, the agent confronts unforeseen circumstances and hazards. As Director Jerry Conley of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game said, "It wasn't until January 5, 1981, when officers Pogue and Elms left their families and homes, that the department employees fully realized the possibility of not returning from such an assignment."

We often use the trite phrase, "in the line of duty." In the case of wildlife agents, the line of duty is a mile long, ranging from speaking engagements to placing their lives in jeopardy.

We'll probably never fully understand the events that led to the tragic fate of Bill Pogue and Conley Elms, nor the jury's decision in Dallas' trial. For now, we can only express our sorrow to the slain officers' families and friends, our appreciation to the two men—and to their fellow conservation officers everywhere—for carrying out their duty in the face of danger, and we can affirm our own commitment to conserving our fish and wildlife resources, despite the hazards. □

Kyle Hill



IT'S THE LAW

By Dave Swindell

I am confused by all the different terms the Commission uses to indicate various tracts of wildlife lands. Please explain what these terms indicate.

Refuge—Tracts in this category are closed to the taking of fish or wildlife. Such areas may be wildlife refuges, fish refuges, or areas closed to the taking of both fish and wildlife. Although federal refuges may be open to limited hunting, no hunting is ever allowed on any wildlife refuge established by the Commission. The possession of guns is prohibited on wildlife refuges.

Bird Sanctuary—These tracts are usually developed areas with high human populations and therefore are no longer suited for use by hunters. Such areas are closed to the taking of all wildlife, including birds. Responsibility for protection of sanctuaries is assumed by the local law enforcement authority.

Fish Management Area—Often a lake, pond or other body of water is subject to special restrictive regulations for the betterment of fishing. Although no special permit is required to fish on such areas, a fishing license is required of all persons between 15 and 65 years of age. Regulations applying to each area are established annually and are published in a brochure titled "Freshwater Sport Fishing Guide."

Critical Wildlife Area—These are small tracts which harbor colonies of nesting birds or other concentrations of wildlife at certain times of the year. At such times they are posted and closed to vehicular traffic and public entry to minimize disturbance.

Wildlife Management Area—These are large tracts established for public hunting and other recreational use. Regulations for such uses are set annually by the Commission. There are two types:

Type I Wildlife Management Area—More than 4½ million acres in Florida, comprising both government-

owned lands and leased private lands, are in this classification. Persons hunting on Type I areas are required to possess a wildlife management area permit (stamp) which is valid on any Type I area. Regulations applicable to each area are published in separate brochures.

Type II Wildlife Management Area—All of the one million acres of this type are privately owned and are opened to the public under cooperative agreements with the Commission. Each tract is the property of a single owner and permits for hunting are sold by the landowner. While no wildlife management area stamp is needed, all hunting license requirements apply.

I heard of a fisherman recently being given a citation for keeping a three-pound black bass. If this happened, why?

It might well have occurred if he was fishing in Orange County on Starke Lake or Lake Prima Vista. Both of these lakes are subjects of an experiment to determine the possibility of increasing the numbers of trophy bass available to fishermen. On these waters, a fisherman may continue to catch and keep 10 bass per day but all of the bass between 14 and 20 inches in length must be returned unharmed to the water. A fish over 20 inches in length (probably five pounds or more) may be kept, as well as those under 14 inches. By reducing pressure on intermediate-size bass, more fish will have the opportunity to reach trophy size, according to the experimental concept. In these lakes you may still take the more abundant smaller fish for eating and keep the real trophy as well. It will be several years before a determination can be made regarding the success of the experiment.

When my hunting dogs tree a 'coon at night, how do I get him out of the tree?

Commission rules prohibit the possession of a gun and light in the woods at night, but provision is made for the nighttime sport of hunting raccoons and opossums with dogs. Persons hunting with dogs are allowed to possess a light and any standard .22 rimfire firearm or a single-shot .410 shotgun using shot no larger than size 6. No .22 magnum arms may be used and permitted firearms may not be loaded except in proximity to the tree in which the animal is bayed. You may not hunt from a vehicle, boat or on horseback by use of a gun and light.



Having studied rattlesnakes for many years, I've seen hundreds of them, all sizes and descriptions. Blue ones, red ones, albinos and black (melanistic) ones, and every color in between. However, after all these years, I've seen something unique in the annals of herpetology.

Wildlife lecturer and photographer, Bill Love of LaBelle has a completely white—notebook paper white—Eastern diamondback rattlesnake (*Crotalus adamanteus*). This specimen is not to be confused with an albino. She lacks any skin pigment and, therefore, has no trace of any pattern. A rather "patriotic" looking rattler, "Snowflake" has a pure white hide, mostly golden eyes bordered with deep blue, and a red tongue. It's a spectacular reptile.

Dave Betham of Palm City gave Love the snake after catching it crossing a Martin County road. Snowflake measured 20 inches at the time of her capture. Now, at the ripe old age of about seven years, she's a fat, five-foot rattler, sporting a rattle with 15 segments.

Snowflake, with a personality all her own, is and always has been quite docile, making no effort to strike anyone. In fact, she rarely even rattles! Reluctant to eat at first, Snowflake had to be force fed pinkie mice and vitamin compounds during her first weeks of captivity. However, she later began to kill and eat adult mice. Today her meals consist of five- to six-week-old rabbits every four to six weeks.

An animal (particularly a reptile) as unusual as this one, is in great demand. A number of herpetologists and showmen have tried to make a deal for Snowflake. One man allegedly offered \$2,000 for her. Love said he refused and emphatically declares



Snowflake

by Emmett Snellings Jr.

that she's not for sale at any price.

After repeated attempts with various males, Snowflake has recently been bred. It is hoped that she might now produce offspring which are as unusual in coloration.

Love takes care of every detail of Snowflake's life. He keeps track of feeding records and any changes in habits. A concave rock to hide beneath and a water bowl are always in her cage. The cage itself is 20" x 48" x 15" high. With regular feeding and a habitat free from the perils of the wild, Snowflake has become somewhat like an old family dog.

Snowflake was exhibited at the State Museum in Gainesville during the Florida Herpetological Conference in 1977. Seeing this unique reptile is an exciting experience. As near as can be determined, no other Eastern diamondback such as this has previously been recorded. □

Bill Love





Wildlife in Wood

Text and photos by Anne L. Armel

Art and nature lovers reach out to touch the downy softness of the bird's feathers. Instead, their fingers feel the hard, textured surface of wood sculpture.

Painstakingly carved, each feather represents the remarkable skills of Jacksonville's Leland Brewsaugh, a master at creating lifelike bird sculptures.

As a well-known Florida wildlife artist, Brewsaugh considers himself lucky for the recognition he's garnered since saying goodbye to the regular hours and regular pay of a commercial artist.

"Lord, it was dangerous to switch from the security of commercial art to the fine arts. To say it was scary is an understatement. But I was one of the lucky ones, in the right place at the right time. With the big awareness of ecology in the 70s, the interest in wildlife took off with a bang. Ecology was at a real peak," he says.

Long before the ecological concerns of the 1970s, Brewsaugh appreciated the raw nature that thrived along the swampy banks of Orange Lake in Central

Florida where his parents brought him as a teenager in 1950. It was in the small community of MacIntosh that Brewsaugh collected birds and studied their habitat, continuing to feed his interest in wildlife. His creative instincts took the form of carved shadow boxes with painted swamp backgrounds and an amateur's interest in taxidermy.

Today, Brewsaugh's preference lies in sculpting Florida's graceful marsh birds like the heron, but he'll carve any of Florida's feathered creatures. "I lean heavily on game birds though, because most of my clientele are hunters," he explains. "But my smarter clients have begun to ask, 'What would you like to make?'"

The customers, Brewsaugh says, really "get into it" when they commission him to do a sculpture. They come often, watching it go up. "I envy the enjoyment they get out of the process," he says.

With a little prodding, he admits that if he were a bird he'd want to be a hawk. "They're quite intelligent, you know," he remarks, grinning.

As a rule, animals are not part of Brewsaugh's

This lifesized dove in flight, left, captures the realism Brewsaugh is after in his sculpture. With a Styrofoam and cardboard model of an owl with a lizard in its beak before him, the artist sketches each feather to be carved.



repertoire. They are only included to add realism to predator scenes. His sculpted owls sometimes dangle a lizard or snake from their beaks.

Brewsaugh acknowledges that his expertise was not always of such high caliber.

"My work evolved from rigid, cigar-store Indian quality to the grace and likeness of real birds. But people are always happy in their ignorance. Now, I have only one major early piece still with me."

One thing hasn't changed with the recognition Brewsaugh has achieved, and that's his attitude toward his work. "I want that bird to be as good as I can get him," he says emphatically.

If price defines artistic acceptance, then Brewsaugh has certainly arrived. Price tags on a Brewsaugh original carving begin at \$2,000, and the dollars don't deter his customers. Currently, the artist has pledged himself to commissions that will take the better part of two years to complete, although he says he's tried to keep some open time for a "purely speculative piece if I should run into an unusual bird."

Carvings make up about 75 percent of Brewsaugh's business while watercolors, oils and prints make up the balance. Watercolors, the medium he started with 7½ years ago, bring in \$300 to \$600 each. To date, he has sold 500 and, to keep up with the demand, he sells 20 different decorator prints of his work nationwide for modest prices that

have attracted more than 400,000 buyers.

Three years ago he entered the limited edition field with remarques. In a corner of each of these special editions, he pencils a small drawing, then numbers and signs the piece. Each year he comes out with a new series for these collector's items.

Occasionally, Brewsaugh produces an oil painting, but when the urge to paint strikes, he usually reaches for watercolors because they dry faster. "Being a commercial artist for so long, I'm used to working in watercolors that dry quickly for deadline," he explains.

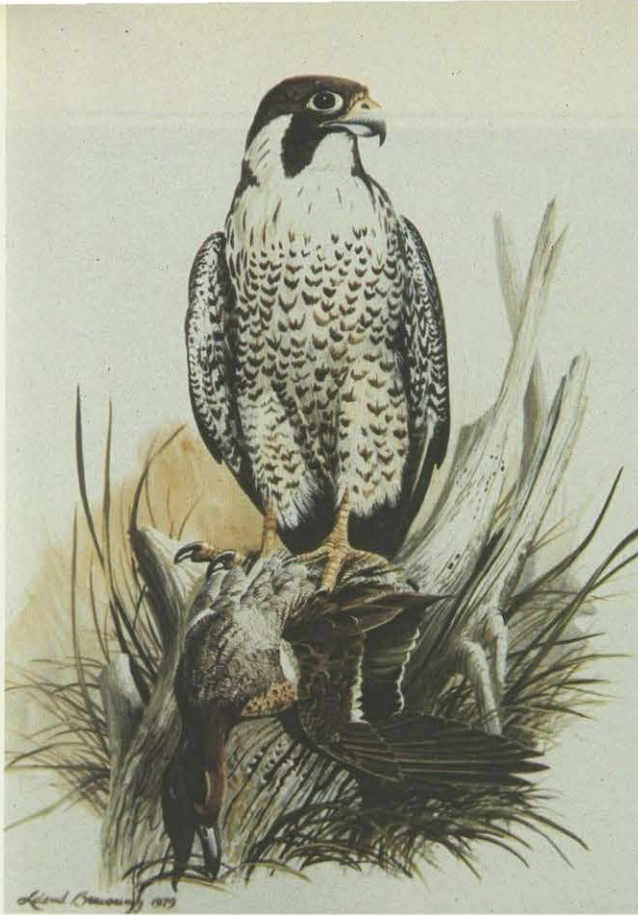
Perhaps those 15 years of deadline pressure are the reason Brewsaugh won't promise a work of art by a specific date. By remaining flexible, he retains the pleasure of creative license and never gets bored with his work, he says.

An exacting procedure exists for the development of every sculpted bird. Brewsaugh begins with the construction of a life-sized Styrofoam and cardboard structure that determines the bird's "attitude" or stance from all angles.

"I work this phase rapidly, almost in a fever, right straight through a day or day and a half. It's enormously helpful because I can work out my problems. I figure out how it'll be supported and I'm able to make any changes and adjustments on the model. Wood is unforgiving and can't be changed once you start."

All of his sculpture is hand-carved with only the glass eyes created by another. Wood duck's pose is common in the wild.





Brewsaugh prefers watercolor to oil. Here, in one of his watercolors, a peregrine guards its catch.

These models remain with Brewsaugh, and he's built up a large personal collection. He never makes the same one twice.

Ink plans on tracing paper follow. Then Brewsaugh meticulously cuts a cardboard template for each feather, transfers it to a block of basswood and begins to carve. Finally, each feather is glued to the body and notched for harmony and flow. Wood-burning creates every shaft and vein prior to the first coat of paint.

"Painting the bird is one of the most difficult stages. To create the illumination of the feather, it takes all the artistic ability you can muster. I'm not just painting the surface, but underneath also. The paint (acrylic) dries fast, so I use a series of glazes that give it a richness and build toward a layered effect. People are surprised when they touch the bird and find it's hard and firm because it has an illusion of downy softness," Brewsaugh says.

The artist's unique approach to sculpture evolved over a period of time. "Most artists still carve out of a flat board and can't get the detail. Mine are lifelike because I get the separation of each feather," he says, sensitive to the years of experimentation it took to reach this plateau.

Early into his second career, Brewsaugh displayed his work at street shows around Florida, doing at least one a month.

"These shows are the one opportunity an artist like me has to get his work to the public. They're like vaudeville was to actors in the old days. Without a large name you can't get in a gallery."

The complexity of the bird field requires that Brewsaugh study almost as much as he sculpts, and after more than seven years, "I'm just getting into it."

Obtaining specimens to work from wasn't too difficult once he established a rapport with museum curators and taxidermists, and they realized he was a serious artist.

However, Brewsaugh says collections of wild birds are running out. He says the law doesn't allow ownership of most birds (except game birds) "even if you found one dead in your back yard." Specimens have a 15- to 20-year lifespan and are not being replaced as they deteriorate, he says. Brewsaugh speculates this situation may create more of an interest in his work. But he acknowledges that these laws are practical because they protect wild birds from extinction.

"I know that one day my detailed set of plans will be my future reference, and I have pages and pages of them. Some day," he muses, "I might publish a book of my plans. They may become valuable for me."

With an eye to the future, Brewsaugh contemplates manufacturing kits for amateur carvers, similar to model kits for ships found on the shelves of many hobby shops.

"An amateur could do it, but I'd have to elaborate with a step-by-step procedure. The only problem is, I keep learning so much that I keep putting it off for another year or so," he says as he picks up a tool and turns back to his latest carving. □

Brewsaugh puts finishing touches on a Florida heron. His work is designed to be viewed from any side.







Incident In The 'Glades

PAINTING BY HENRY KRITZLER
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM REED

"The big cat was at bay in a little clear patch of high ground. The dogs were talking tough to him but I noticed they kept a respectful distance from those razor-sharp claws and dagger teeth. Old Bluke was favoring his left hind leg and a trickle of blood from his flank said he'd gotten a mite careless."—E.G. Christie, Forest and Field, 1913.

Times were tough in the early '30s when Henry Kritzler finished his training at the Art Institute in Brooklyn, N.Y. When an opportunity to further his education presented itself, he grabbed it and launched into the study of biology at Bard College. He later taught there. Then, for the final 10 years of his teaching career, he was at Florida State University in Tallahassee where oceanography was his field.

"I painted off and on down through the years," Kritzler says. Most of his artistic endeavors, however, involved technical drawings of biological specimens. When he retired some eight years ago, he had an idea to paint a series of scenes involving the natural resources of the area. He has completed two thus far, one of oyster tongs on Apalachicola Bay, the other of mullet netters at work. "Somewhere along the line I became involved in painting pictures of houses and other structures. No sooner do I get well along with one project, than someone else is knocking on the door wanting a painting of the old family homestead or other buildings of sentimental or historic value. I hope to be able to do more wildlife work in the future," the artist says.

Morrie Naggiar

Wild Flowers * * *

by Mary Ellen Smith

Summer, fall, spring and, in some places, even winter, Florida offers material for an exquisite bouquet of wild flowers, rich in color and varied in form and texture.

The ranks of those who can roll botanical names off their tongues and identify family and species are growing, thanks to the Native Plant Society and various garden clubs and trail groups. But even if you don't know "toadflax" from "tickseed" or "spatterdock" from "spiderwort," you can appreciate the richness of the wild flower beauty offered by non-urban Florida.

Actually, wild flower enthusiasts who can identify the *Asclepias tuberosa* ssp. *rolfsii* (butterfly weed) at 20 paces are a select minority. The rank-and-file observers simply enjoy wandering down trails or through fields or swamps to see, smell, touch and photograph flowers in a natural setting to the accompaniment of bird song. However, a bit of academic knowledge does not spoil this ambience. A little book, *Wild Flowers of Florida*, by Glenn Fleming, Pierre Genelle and Robert W. Long can enhance your enjoyment and the Audubon Society *Field Guide to North American Wild Flowers, Eastern*

Tickseed

Wilderness Graphics



Region, offers color pictures of many Florida flowers.

How do we define a wild flower? A blooming weed? An uncultivated flower? You can concoct your own definition. To me, wild flowers are survivors. Unlike cultivated plants which grow and glow from watering, fertilizing and pampering, wild flowers struggle to "make do" with whatever is available. With no help from man and often with considerable hindrance, they bloom defiantly and gloriously in ditches, pastures and vacant lots. They cover sand dunes and glow in swamps.

Florida's wild flowers range in color from white to deep purple; the predominant color is yellow. Left to their own devices, nature would color the Sunshine State gold. The indomitable tickseed (*coreopsis*) blooms from spring to fall along the banks of ditches and in damp fields, and if mowed down, like truth, springs up again.

In summer along the coasts, wild cacti or prickly pears glow with buttercup-like blossoms which are followed by bright red prickly pears. In much of the state, primrose willows, tall shrubs that like damp soils, produce yellow hibiscus-sized blooms. Many types of sunflowers spring up in sandy fields and along roadsides. The yellow spatterdock, looking like a half-opened water lily, blooms on ponds and in ditches, and dark waters are lit with the yellow flowers of the bladderwort.



Lantana

Wilderness Graphics



Arrowhead

Mary Ellen Smith



Prickly Pear

Wilderness Graphics

Some of the state's wild flowers include tickseed, opposite page, which blooms from spring to fall along banks of ditches. Lantana, left, will bloom almost everywhere in sandy soil. Prickly pear, above, glows in summer along the coasts while arrowhead, top, is one of our prettiest white flowers.



Goldenrod

Morrie Naggar

In fall, fields glow with the glory of goldenrod.

Florida offers some spectaculars staged by yellow flowers. One no flower fancier should miss happens along the northward-flowing St. Johns River, usually in mid-April.

The marshes that edge the river in the south Brevard region where it begins, so long winter-dry and brittle-brown, become almost overnight a mile-wide river of dazzling yellow flowers. In fact, there are usually two golden rivers, one to the east of the blue St. Johns, and a wider one to the west. They seem to flow in surges of color from State Road 192 northward toward the far horizon.

Like Wordsworth's "host of golden daffodils," millions of clusters of tiny daisy-like flowers, each smaller than a penny, unite to form one of Florida's stunning wild flower shows.

What are these yellow flowers? One year I stopped at a camp and asked a group of fishermen. They answered variously and erroneously, "goldenrod, mustard, buttercups, primroses."

Consulting books and experts shed little light on the subject. But a call to the St. Johns Fisheries Field Laboratory of the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission gave me an answer.

The dazzling flowers "continuous as the stars that shine and twinkle on the Milky Way" were and are *Senecio glabellus*, sometimes called "butterweed," a relative of golden ragwort, member of the sunflower family (*Asteraceae*).

Florida has a richness of blue flowers, too. Toad-flax, tiny snap dragons, often create a blue-purple mist along the shores of lakes. Violets bloom in

damp areas. The blue-purple iris flowers in spring and, in some areas of central Florida, creates a dazzling display. (The tiger swallowtail butterfly sips nectar from this iris).

For years, I have found the blue spiderwort in lavish bloom along old railroad tracks at the Canaveral National Seashore. These flowers are said to turn from blue to pink when there are unsafe levels of radiation.

The blue pickerel weed, dainty as any hyacinth, is a tireless bloomer in ponds and ditches during spring and summer when its sky-blue spikes attract yellow and black swallowtail butterflies. The deep purple flower spikes of blazing star appear in pinelands during summer and fall.

Wild Iris

Mary Ellen Smith



In fall, fields glow with the glory of goldenrod, opposite page top. Below, opposite page, wild iris flowers in spring, creating a dazzling display. Night-blooming cereus, right, has gone wild along the shores of the Indian River, blooming in June. Below top, spiderwort flourishes at Canaveral and the white water lily is common throughout the state.



Night-blooming Cereus

Morrie Naggia

Spiderwort

Morrie Naggia



Water Lily

Wilderness Graphics



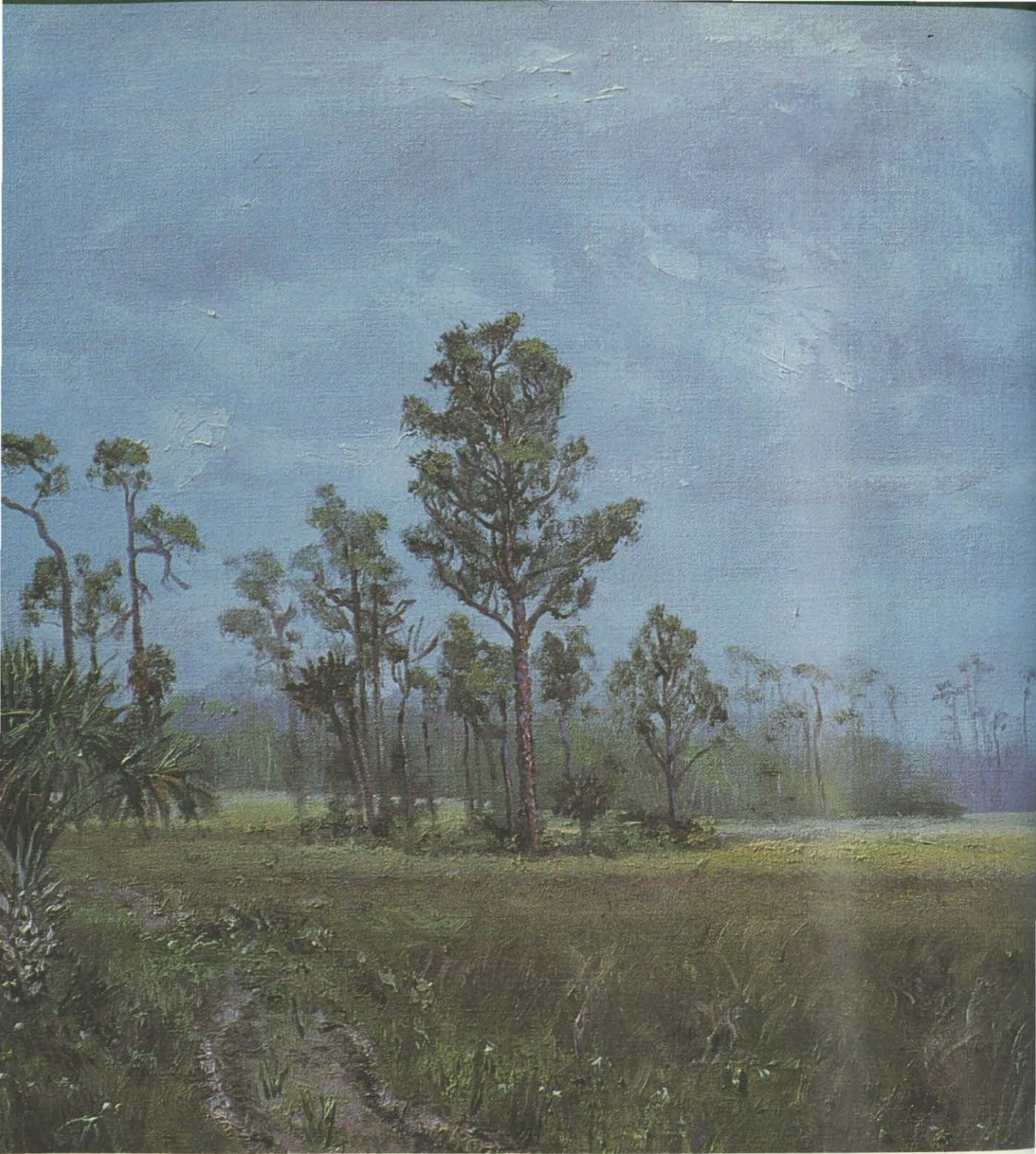
Florida has a full share of pink flowers, too. Marsh pinks, meadow beauties, tar flowers, mallows, vervain—to name but a few.

The most spectacular of the reds is the wild hibiscus (*Hibiscus coccineas*) that flowers in August in the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary 16 miles west of Immokalee. But purple-pink wild phlox also makes a brave show in summer along roads in Marion County, and yellow and red gaillardias and lantana bloom almost everywhere in sandy soil.

Florida has almost as many white flowers as it has yellow ones. There is the wild moon vine that produces saucer-shaped blossoms by night, the buttonbush, mikania, arrowhead, elderberry, water lilies, swamp lilies and spider lilies, loblolly bay and Southern magnolia.

The night-blossoming cereus, though not usually classed as a wild flower, has gone wild along the shores of the Indian River. There it climbs the sabal palms and, during June nights, produces blooms of bridal elegance.

The photographing of wild flowers can be a challenging and engrossing hobby. For my pictures, I use a 35 mm. camera, a Nikon with a 55 mm. micro-Nikkor lens or, if butterflies are involved, a 300 mm. lens. And I have learned to watch out for snakes, ant hills and poison ivy—that three-leafed vine that grows so luxuriantly where the most perfect flowers bloom. □

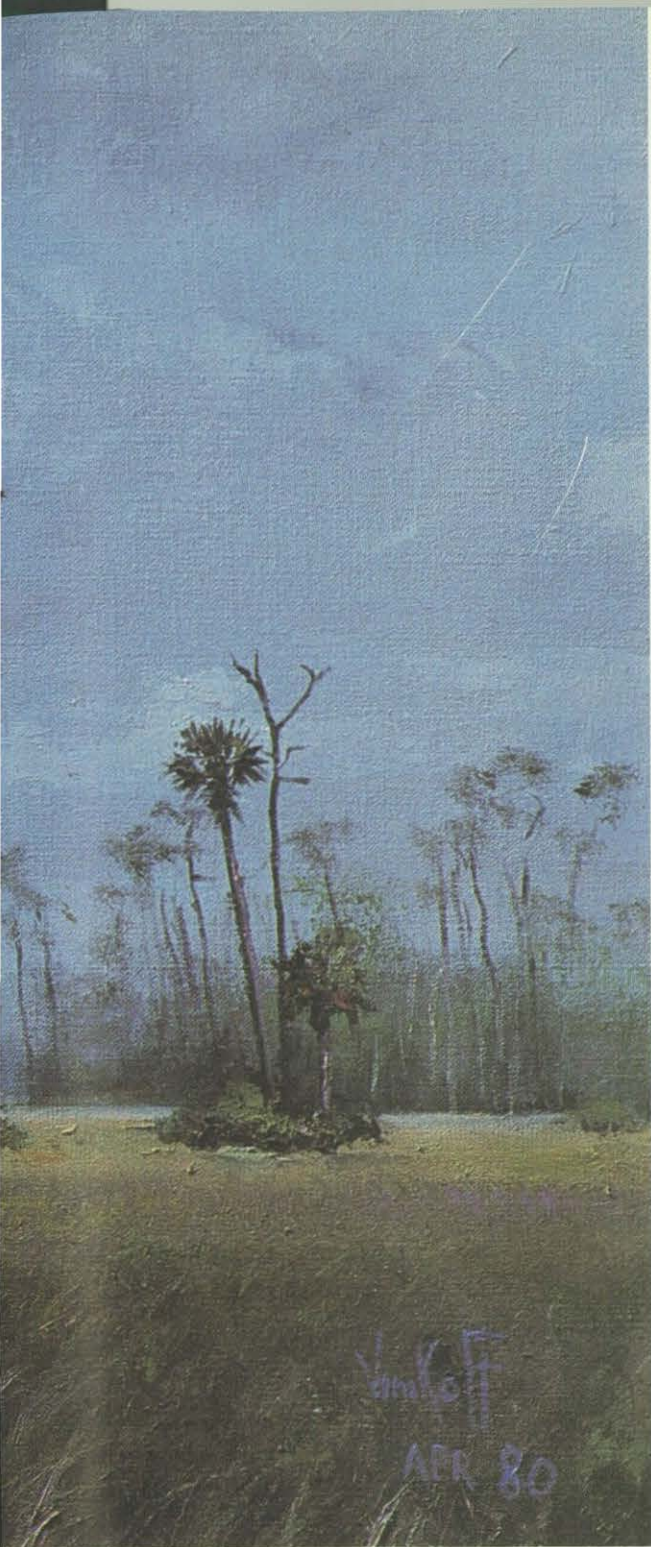


Sam Vinikoff's

PORTRAITS OF THE EVERGLADES

by Morrie Naggiar

Photos by Michael A. Horton



Pine prairies at Big Cypress

It's a long way from the grimy eastside London of his youth to the sun-drenched vastness of Florida's Everglades, but Sam Vinikoff made the jump, and a good many people are pleased he did so. His paintings—mostly landscapes of the Everglades and the Big Cypress—have earned him considerable acclaim. His works are one of a kind, for he has resisted the temptation to produce prints of any of his paintings and, judging from his feelings on the matter, it is unlikely he ever will get into the print business.



Pines, Cabbage Palms and Cypress at the Big Cypress





Ironheads at the Tamiami Canal

SAM VINIKOFF

Vinikoff's is an interesting story; how he came to be a disciple of the south Florida wilds, spreading word of the glory of this unique wilderness by means of his meticulously detailed oil paintings.

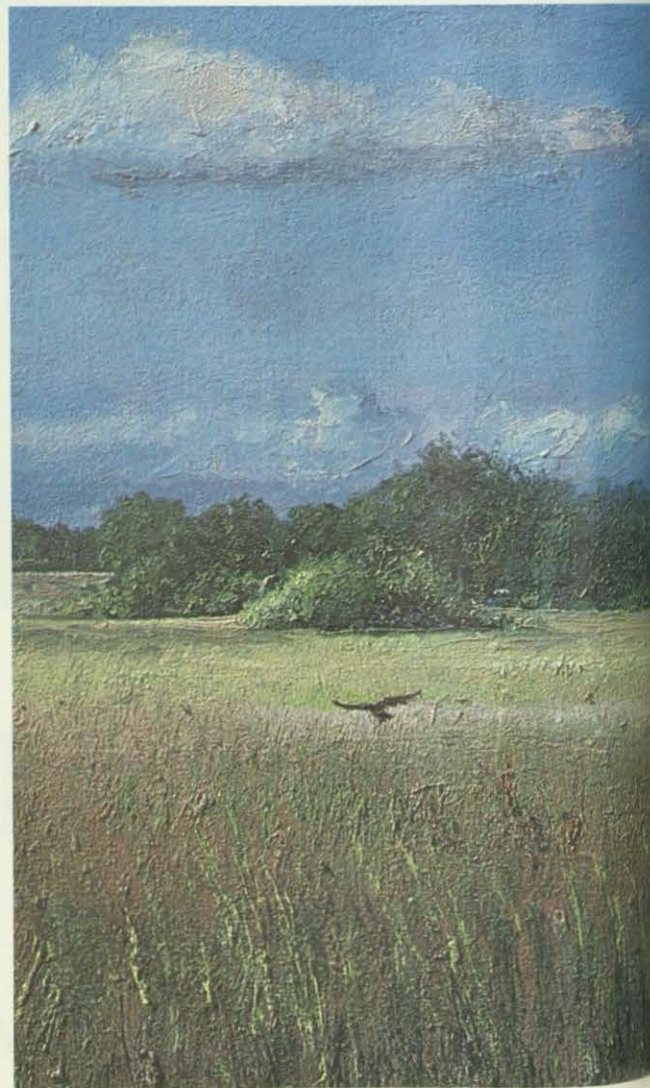
Born in London in 1919, Vinikoff lived under circumstances he charitably labels as austere. It was not too promising a beginning for a future landscape painter—he says he had never viewed a “natural” landscape until he was 15 or 16 years old.

He had already begun working in clothing design and manufacture when the turmoil in Europe finally erupted into World War II. Vinikoff entered the army, serving with the Royal Artillery. His art talent was put to good use, making drawings of distant horizons, showing prominent objects such as water towers, church steeples and the like as aids to the artillerymen.

Some years after the war's end, conditions in England were such that he thought he would do better elsewhere. He landed in Miami with his wife and two children in 1957. Because of his design and clothing manufacturing experience, he was able to enter the field in Florida.

Not long after he moved to the United States, he discovered the sport of fishing, an activity in which he'd never before taken part, although he describes a brother, who remains in England, as a leading Thames River angler. One thing lead to another and soon Vinikoff was painting fish. A local sportsman

Hawks flushing in the National Park





Pa-hay-okee, River of Grass



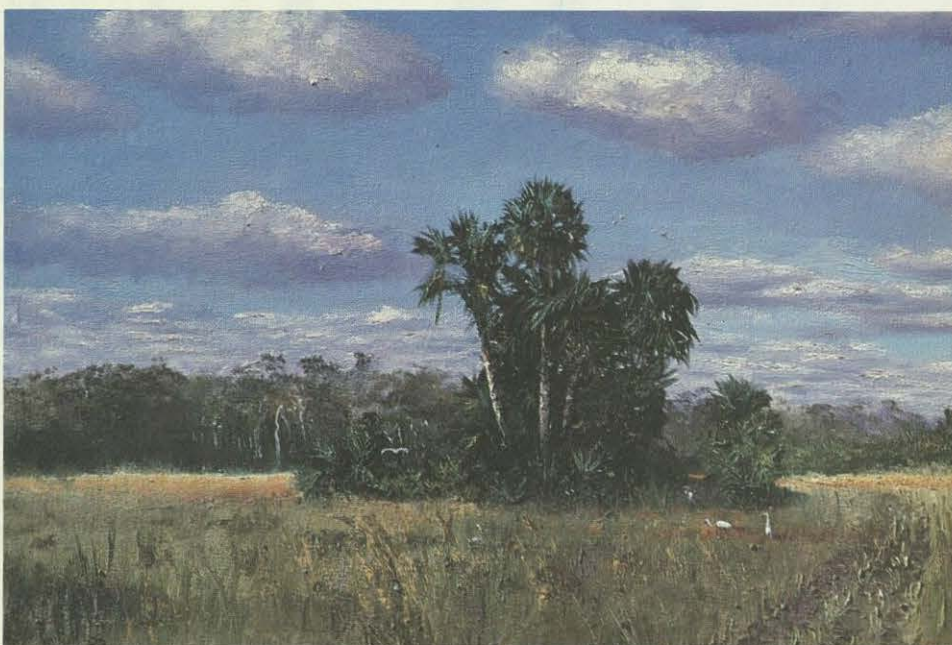
Sundown at Big Cypress



SAM VINIKOFF



Soggy Prairies in the National Park

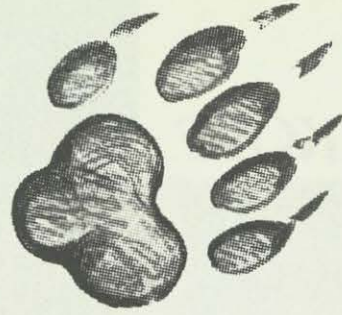


Hammock on the Trail

saw his work and commissioned a snook painting. His interest further piqued, he began painting birds, more fish and other elements of the outdoor scene. Entranced by the beauty of south Florida, he began his landscape work.

The artist emphasizes that everything is done on location rather than from photographs or sketches as some painters do. Subtleties of light, ever changing, is something he tries, successfully, to capture in his painting. His enthusiasm for the panorama of the Everglades and the Big Cypress comes through as a vital element of his efforts. The mood of the place and of the moment is readily apparent.

Vinikoff chuckles when he recalls an early instructor who told him he was much more adept at drawing trees than he was at depicting people. We've never seen one of his "people" pictures, but you must admit, he paints a mean tree. □



SKUNK

For most of us, the name "skunk" conjures an image of a black animal with two broad stripes down its back and a bad odor. But the striped skunk has a little-known cousin—the much smaller spotted skunk.

The white-on-black spotted skunk (*Spilogale putoris*) is not spotted in the same sense that a leopard or a Dalmation is. It is, in fact, striped; but the stripes are wavy and broken, and resemble spots at first glance. One large spot between its eyes gives it a comic expression.

Information about the spotted skunk in Florida is almost as elusive as the animal itself. For some reason, very few researchers have spent any time studying this charming animal. Secretive and nocturnal, it is rarely seen even in areas where it is common.

The actual distribution of spotted skunks in Florida remains something of a mystery. One map shows the animals occurring in two geographically separate locations: One subspecies (*S. putoris ambarvalis*), found south of a line from Daytona Beach to Pasco County; and another subspecies (*S. putoris putoris*), found only in extreme northwest Florida, and from there northward.

Other mammalogists disagree. They maintain that the two subspecies integrate in north-central Florida, and that no geographic discontinuity exists. Still other biologists suggest that the species is slowly dying out here. Which situation is correct? Only future research will answer that question.

Spotted skunks have been around since at least the early Pleistocene, and possibly the late Pliocene. Fossil evidence indicates that early spotted skunks looked very much like the spotted skunk of today.

My first (and so far, only) experience with spotted skunks occurred when I was about ten years old. Driven out of its normal habitat by a construction project, a young male skunk wandered onto our back porch in suburban Fort Lauderdale. My parents coaxed him into a five-gallon can, and covered the top of the can with a piece of canvas. The next day a vet "descented" him, and my parents tried, with some success, to make a pet of him.

After his inclusion in our household, we would often hear Sylvester crunching on a roach or some other insect under the furniture. Spotted skunks are omnivores, eating everything from insects, mice, and crayfish to fruit and corn. They are also fond of eggs, but some eggs are too large for the animals to bite open.

Instead, they solve the problem of getting into the egg by cracking or "rolling" it. One mammalogist described this behavior as looking like a football center passing the ball between his legs. The skunk straddles the egg and holds it between the forelegs, then passes it backwards under its abdomen and gives it a kick to the rear with one hind leg. The animal keeps on trying until the egg hits something hard and cracks.

Spotted skunks require a dry habitat. In a study he did at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, Dr. Llewellyn Ehrhart found them abundant in flatwoods and mixed scrub, but absent in adjacent marsh areas. They live in gopher tortoise burrows and other locations that provide a dark and well-protected den.

For whatever reason, spotted skunks are rarely seen as road kills, even in areas where they are common. "Why?" is another question that research

By Carolee Boyles-Sprenkel

has yet to answer. Are they just so shy that they avoid roadsides? Do they back away from bright headlights instead of freezing? Or is there some other reason?

The first author to mention skunks in the New World was Hernandez in 1615. He described seeing black and white evil-smelling animals in Mexico that he called "yzquiepatl," which was an indigenous, probably Aztec, word. Other writers have described the spotted skunk as emitting a concentrated "onion" odor. One mammalogist says it has a "less unpleasant" odor than that of the striped skunk, but I suspect that may be a matter of proximity.

Shortly after my parents acquired Sylvester, a cat had the misfortune to encounter a spotted skunk under our bathroom window. The odor didn't bother us much, but all the plants in the area were burned, and the paint on the house faded.

After being repeatedly frightened by a relative's dogs, Sylvester became increasingly shy and temperamental. Eventually we found a home for him in a nearby zoo. His encounters with the dogs, though, gave us a chance to observe the defensive behavior of spotted skunks.

When confronted by a threat, a spotted skunk stamps and shuffles its front feet in an effort to scare off the intruder. If this approach fails, the skunk assumes a unique "handstand" position, which it can maintain for a number of seconds. Any intruder not intimidated by these tactics risks a face full of essence of skunk.

So little is known about the spotted skunk in Florida that much of its life here remains a mystery. Not until someone undertakes ecological studies of this animal will the questions be answered. □

... of a different stripe

L.M. Ehrhart





Lynn Stone

By the Dark of the Moon

By Lynn Stone

Watching a giant loggerhead sea turtle nest on a dark Florida beach is like being privy to a window on Mesozoic times, for the Atlantic loggerhead (*Caretta caretta caretta*) is the progeny of many, many summers past. Its ancestor, the titanic *Archelon*, was crawling onto sandy beaches from the phosphorescence of night seas 90 million years ago. Along the evolutionary way most of the great reptiles, including the dinosaurs of land and sea, mysteriously vanished, but the sea turtles, albeit with modifications, survived.

The loggerhead leads a somewhat tenuous existence today. After all, this survivor from the Age of Dinosaurs has to share its nesting beaches with condominiums, and its ocean with ships, nets, and a plethora of marine pollutants.

While the loggerhead is not abundant in the United States—the U.S. Department of the Interior counts it as threatened—it is, hands down, the most common nesting sea turtle in Florida, using both coasts. Perhaps 10,000 loggerheads nested in the American Southeast last summer, and about 7,000 of them in Florida.

The greatest concentration here is between Cape Canaveral and Jupiter Island on the Atlantic coast.

They nest regularly in Georgia and South Carolina, and more sparingly in North Carolina, Virginia, Mississippi, and Texas. Occasional nests are reported from as far north as New Jersey.

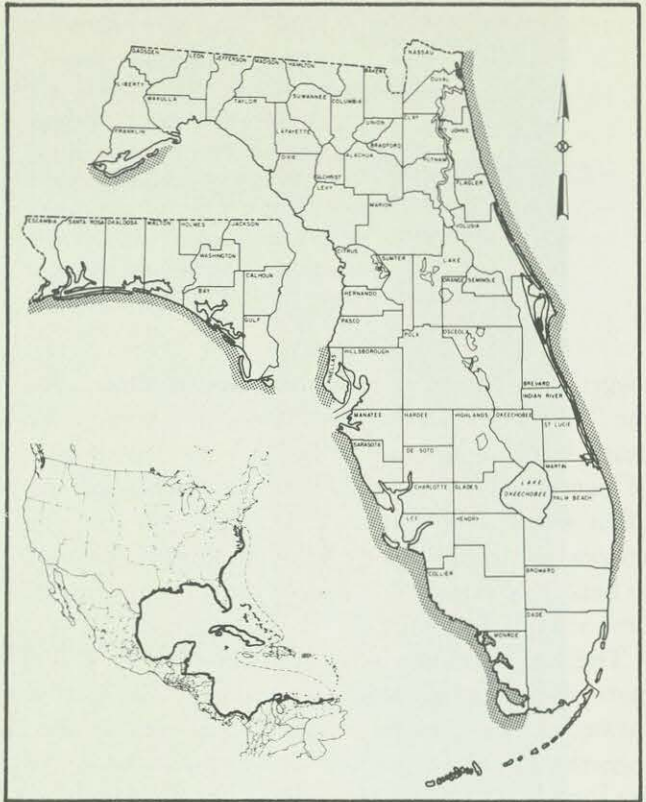
Like most species of marine turtles, loggerheads have a cosmopolitan distribution. They live in the warmer regions of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans and throughout the Mediterranean Sea. In the Americas, loggerheads normally range from Virginia south to Argentina, although stragglers occur north to the Canadian Maritimes in summer.

Unlike most of its brethren, the loggerhead tolerates comparatively cold water. Occasionally the turtles are stunned and even killed by rapidly cooling water, but scientists have discovered that loggerheads usually avoid contending with cold seas. Their bodily functions slow and they become torpid, eventually entering a type of undersea hibernation. They apparently lodge themselves under rocks for a few days. When the water warms, they become active again.

Typical of sea turtles, the loggerhead is a ponderous and vulnerable alien on shore. But with a lightweight, streamlined carapace and paddle-like flippers fore and aft, it is a powerful, agile swimmer, marvelously adapted for the sea, where it feeds, sleeps, and mates. Male loggerheads, so far as it is known, never leave the ocean.

The loggerhead is distinguished from its cousins by its massive, block-like head and by more technical differences, like the number and arrangement of bony plates on its upper body. Specimens that are not blanketed by algae and barnacles have characteristic rusty coloration on the upper parts of the body.

Nesting females in the Southeast usually weigh between 200 and 300 pounds. They are considerably smaller than leatherbacks, larger than hawksbills and ridleys, and comparable in size to smaller greens.



Marine turtles are a mysterious lot, and the loggerhead is no exception. Although a nesting turtle is easy to observe, a turtle at sea is not.

The period during which hatchling and juvenile

Lynn Stone



Lumbering loggerhead female, opposite page, begins trek inward to nest along Florida's shore. If not scared by noise or lights, she continues upward to a high, dry beach zone. Map, above, shows loggerhead range.

Using hind flippers, she scoops a bulb-shaped nest. Below right, she sighs and lifts her head as the eggs tumble into the nest. Gland secretions to wash out sand make her appear to cry during this time. Below left is average clutch of golf ball-sized eggs. She will usually only nest every other year.

loggerheads are virtually unobservable is often called the "lost year." In fact, the "year" is a number of years, but biologists know little about growth rates of loggerheads in the wild. Plate-sized sub-adults are often encountered in coastal waters, but no one knows with certainty how long it takes a loggerhead to become plate-sized or where the turtle spends its time attaining that size.

The age at which a loggerhead reaches sexual maturity and the age at which it typically dies are also mysteries. Dr. Jim Richardson, who has studied loggerheads in Georgia since 1964, thinks the turtles are long-lived—30 to 46 years on the average—but not the centenarians of turtle folklore.

Loggerheads are essentially carnivores, preying on sponges, jellyfish, and shellfish. Adult loggerheads are prey only for sharks, and such encounters are probably infrequent. Other natural enemies of the loggerhead are less conspicuous. They include certain marine parasites and the red tide organism, *Gymnodinium breve*, a phytoplankton that periodically blooms to excess and decimates sea life.

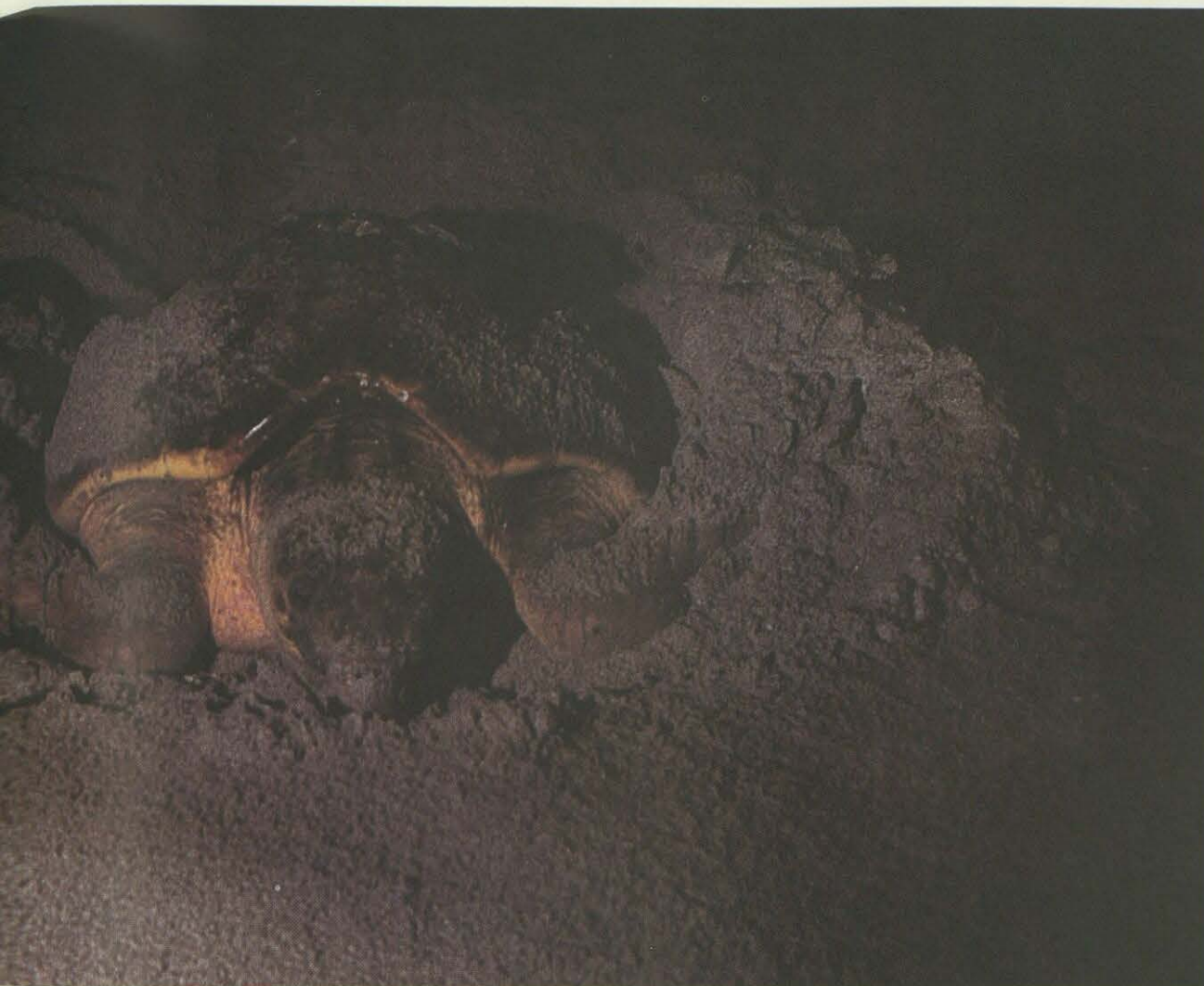
Swimming loggerheads are frequently seen by Florida boaters, but the best way to study a loggerhead is to find one nesting. The ritual begins when the turtle cautiously beaches herself on a late spring or summer night. If she is not frightened by noise or lights, or confronted by a sea wall, she normally crawls onto the high, dry beach zone. She shapes a shallow body pit in the sand, then scoops a bulb-shaped nest hole with her hind flippers. Jaws slightly ajar, she sighs and lifts her head as the eggs, each the size of a golf ball, tumble into the nest. Meanwhile, glands near her eyes secrete a solution which helps rid her of excess body salts and rinses sand away. The tears and sighs once prompted observers to conclude that she was crying in her labor.

After the clutch (an average of 115 eggs) has been laid, the hand-like hind flippers cover the eggs with sand. Sweeps of the loggerhead's broad, front flippers obliterate the site, but she leaves a telltale, tractor-like path from the nest area to the sea.



Lynn Stone





Wilderness Graphics

Lynn Stone



A loggerhead is not adapted to a terrestrial existence. Because of her weight and low carriage, the sand is compressed against her shell, forcing her to pause frequently and draw oxygen into her lungs. Like a miniature, amphibious tank, she finally reaches a moist ribbon of crushed shells and the rumbling surf.

A loggerhead usually nests every other year or every third year; she rarely nests in two consecutive years. During nesting years, however, the turtle may nest as many as seven times. Generally she nests at 12-day intervals. A loggerhead which dug six nests on Sanibel Island in 1979 laid 917 eggs, but such prolificacy is necessary for a species whose eggs and young are subject to heavy predation.

Fifty to 60 days later, the baby loggerheads emerge at night, all of them within three minutes! Thanks to a temporary egg tooth, young turtles partially free themselves from the leathery eggshells a few days before actually emerging from the nest. Immediately after battling topside, the hatchlings steer a course directly toward the sea if there are not artificial lights around. Since young turtles are light-sensitive, such lights distract them, upsetting the sea-finding appa-

ratus that works so surely on dark beaches. By morning, those turtles which have mistakenly scrambled inland are doomed to die of dehydration or traffic.

Of course, dark beaches are not without peril either. The tiny loggerheads are bite-sized morsels for raccoons and night herons, and they are no match for the claws of ghost crabs. Hatchlings which survive the beach gauntlet plunge into the ocean where they are prey for fish and predatory birds. The survivors presumably reach the sargasso weed in the Gulf Stream.

All sea turtles in the United States are protected by provisions of the Endangered Species Act. It is illegal to harm sea turtles on American beaches and in American offshore waters, and it is illegal to import sea turtle products into the United States. Poaching is not a major problem, but many loggerheads are inadvertently drowned in the nets of shrimp trawlers. In addition, the loggerhead's nesting habitat continues to dwindle as more resorts sprout on Florida beaches. Curbing beach traffic and lights, however, may help preserve at least remnant habitat on developed shores. □

Lynn Stone





big bucks in african reds

When you stop at your local tackle shop to get a cup of worms before heading for your favorite panfish waters, the odds are you'll never consider the origin of the bait. Chances are, though, they came from one of Florida's worm farms.

Most worm raisers have small operations, limiting sales to tackle shops within their immediate area. There's an obvious reason why there are no large-scale operators even in this era of big operations in virtually every other field.

Until now, worm farming has been basically a labor-intensive operation, and when a worm farmer expanded beyond a certain size—perhaps an acre or two—the amount of labor needed to run the opera-

tion became so great that it was no longer economically feasible.

Worms require special feeding and watering of their beds, and, of course, have to be separated by size and placed in individual containers—all tedious, slow, hand work. Worm farming through the years has been a small operation, usually handled by one man.

However, there's a revolution of sorts taking place near the little hamlet of Felda in southwest Florida. There Florida Worm Growers Inc., is developing new ideas and methods of farming, utilizing mechanization to reduce hand operations.

If you happen to notice two huge sheds just a little way east of Highway 29 near Felda, you will be seeing the centerpiece of this successful revolution in worm farming.

The sheds, 50 feet wide by 200 feet long, contain 28 beds each, 4 feet wide by 95 feet long, for a total of 56 beds. In these, approximately five million African red worms are being raised. Of course, there could be even more as Bill Delisle, vice-president of Worm Growers, ex-Lake Trafford guide and expert angler, readily admits, for no one is about to

text and photographs
by max hunn

inventory the livestock, and at the rate they multiply, any figure would be wrong within a few days anyway.

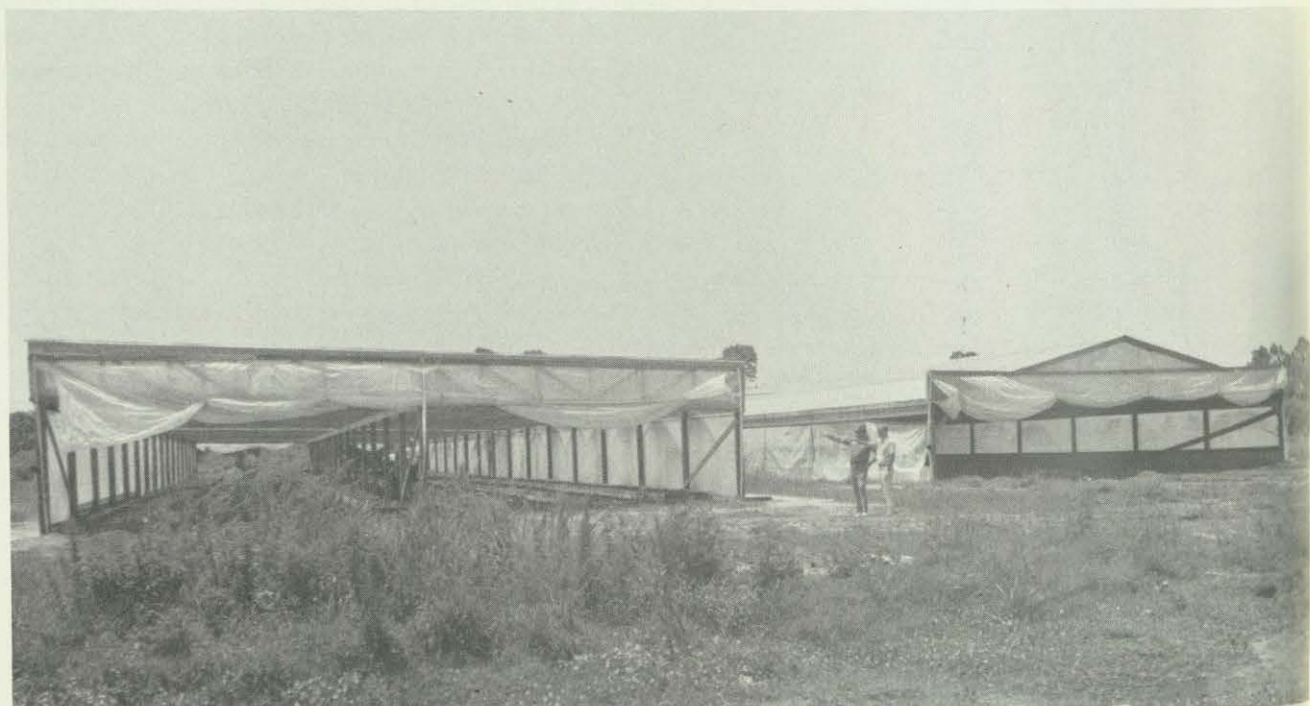
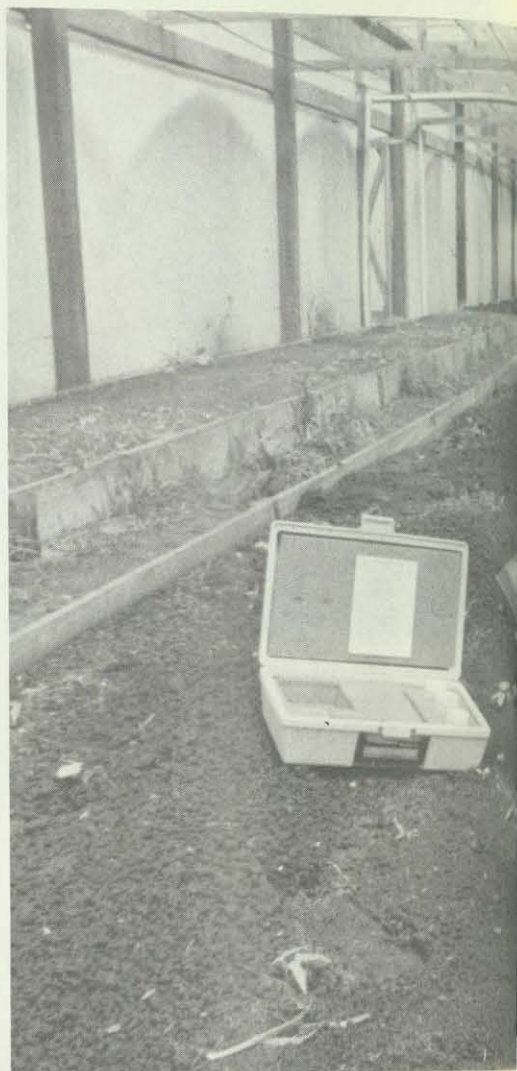
The two most popular fishing worms in the lower two-thirds of the Florida peninsula are the African red worm (sometimes known as the African night-crawler but no relation to the American variety) and the wiggler.

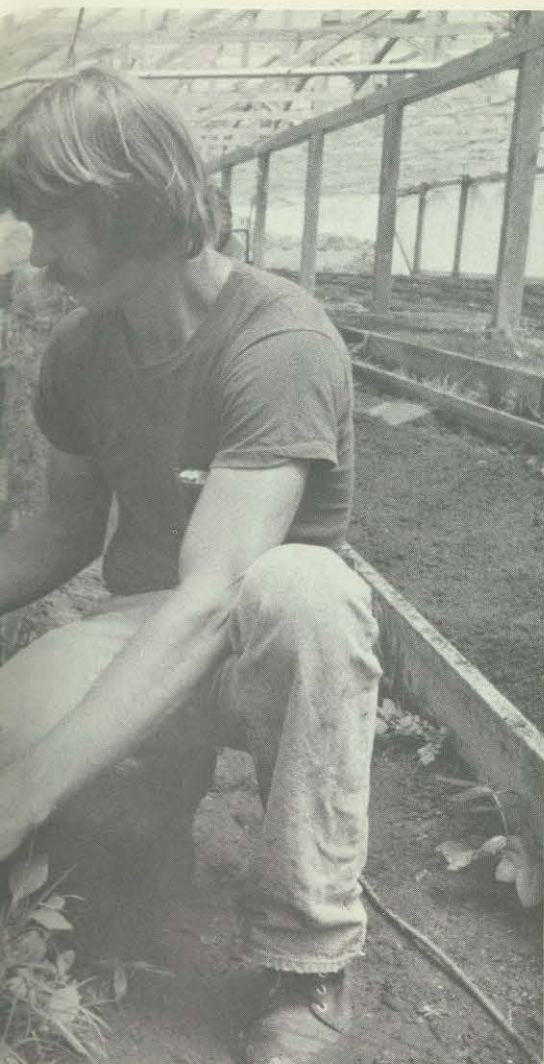
While the wigglers are easiest to grow, they do have drawbacks—they're very hard and small. It takes several to make a tasty bait on a hook. Some anglers prefer them, however, because they are tough. They stick to the hook, but whether this is a vital asset is debatable. After all, fish appeal is the key factor, and Steve Delisle, who has tested both types of worms, feels the African red rates higher there.

Although the African reds are more difficult to raise, the company decided to raise them, convinced that the worm is really a better bait. Plus, African reds cost an angler less per cup than wigglers.

Little did they realize how tricky the project would be. Being of tropical origin, the worm requires a temperature range of 50 to 90 degrees. If the temperature drops below 50 degrees or rises above 90, the worms will die. Because of this, it is not possible to raise African reds outside of Florida, unless a worm farmer invests in an expensive air conditioned-heated building to standardize the temperature.

Not only must the temperature be controlled, but also the acidity of the bed. Africans prefer an environment with a pH of about 5.7, conditions





slightly on the acid side of the scale. However, if the soil becomes too acid, lime can be added to the bed to correct the condition.

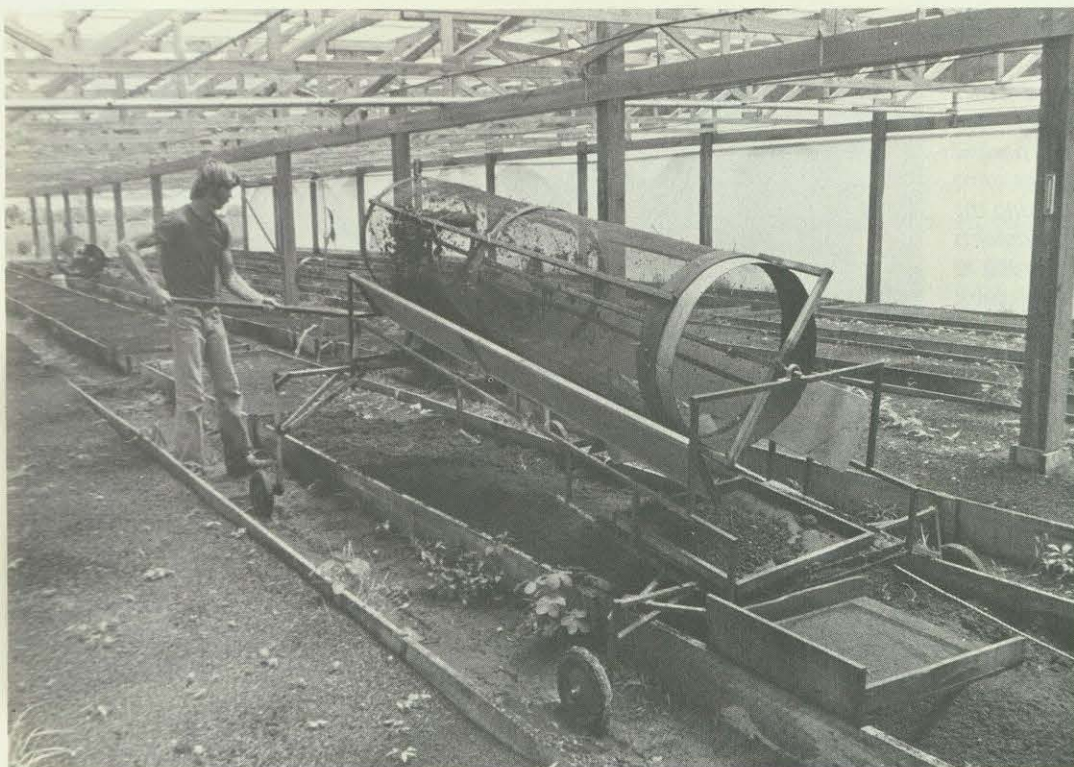
The worms are very temperamental. Improper acidity, food, or moisture can cause the worms to leave the beds.

Worms reproduce rapidly. They produce egg capsules every nine to 11 days, and each capsule will produce from four to 20 worms depending upon the bed's environment. The eggs hatch in from two hours to five days. The young develop very rapidly, and in three to five months, depending upon the temperature and food, become adult worms.

The beds are harvested every two weeks. If the worms are allowed to feed longer, they grow too large for fishing. The African worm can grow as long as two feet, hardly bream or shellcracker bait, but it takes months to achieve such size.

With so many beds and worms, Florida Worm Growers had to develop mechanized assistance. To gather the worms, a specially designed harvester is used. The device features a rotating drum of hardware cloth mounted on wheels which straddles the bed at a 20-degree angle.

Worm-containing soil is pitchforked into the upper end of the drum which is driven by a small electric motor. Most of the dirt sifts out through the wire screening, leaving the worms to drop into a small screening box at the lower end. By sifting this



Steve Delisle, above, tests the pH of the soil. Africans prefer it about 5.7 to 7. On the facing page are the sheds while at left Delisle shows how the special worm harvesting machines work.

box rapidly, additional dirt is removed, and the worms are brushed before being packed into Styrofoam cups.

Worms are weighed rather than counted when placed in the containers. It's essential that a cup not be over filled, or the worms will die. They are packed in Florida peat moss, the same moss used in creating the growing beds.

In order to help in maintaining as well as harvesting the wriggling crop, the company purchased two tractors, and then lengthened their axles to straddle the worm beds. A front loader on one tractor was modified to fit inside the cypress board beds.

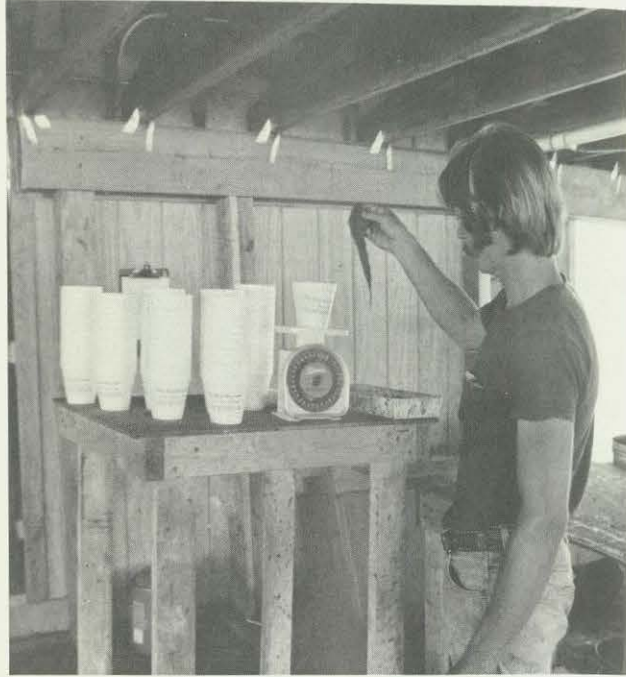
This is used to dump the new peat moss into the beds, and to scoop the used moss out, easier and faster than the old shovel method.

The tractors also haul two feed spreaders. One to spread cow manure, a very effective worm food, and the other to distribute other foods.

Feeding the worms, too, has its problems. It's necessary to change their menu, or they become unhappy and leave the beds in search of greener pastures. Besides peat moss and cow manure there are commercially manufactured worm foods available from several large food corporations.

The Felda growers, though, are trying to develop their own formula to eliminate having to change the menu at regular intervals. If they can find it, the feeding problem will be simplified.

Another important phase is providing the proper amount of moisture. To ensure this, the buildings

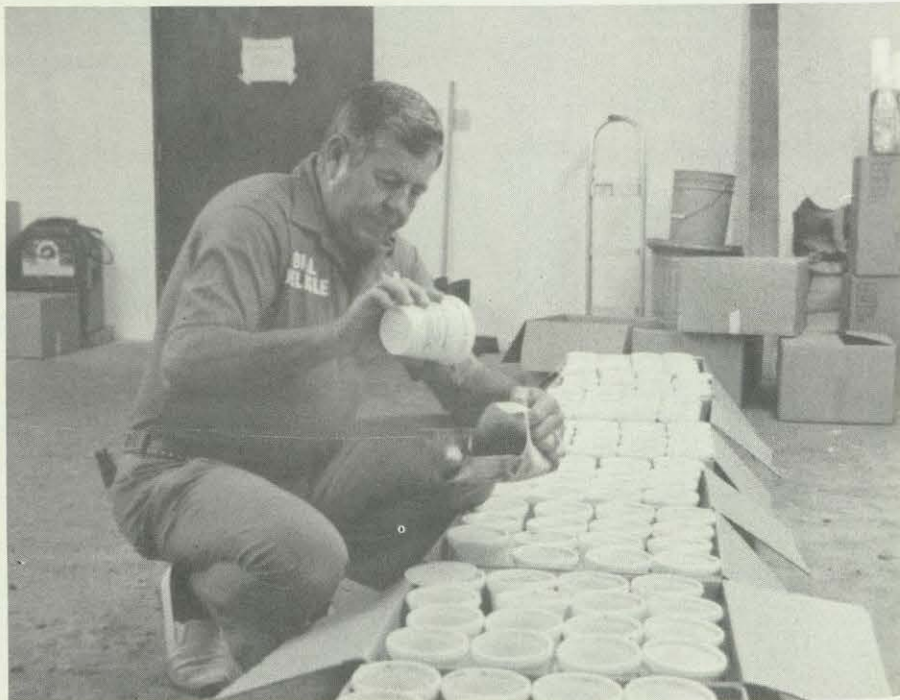


have overhead sprinkling systems which come on at regular intervals.

Once the worms are harvested and packed in the special containers, they are shipped weekly by truck to the various bait retailers.

The story behind those worms you buy for fish bait is a fascinating one. Growing them isn't quite as easy as it seems. □

Worms are weighed rather than counted, above, when placed in containers packed with peat moss, the same moss used in creating the worm beds. Shipments go out weekly by truck to various bait dealers.





GATOR BITE

by Trisha Spillan

When the call came in, it was not unlike many others that Jimmie McDaniel receives. There was an alligator in someone's backyard. Please do something about it. But McDaniel was soon to learn he would never forget this particular alligator.

It was June 4, 1979. When McDaniel got to the home in south Tallahassee, the seven-foot alligator was lying next to a fence. The biologist had already corralled one alligator earlier that day for the nuisance alligator trapper and figured it wouldn't take much to secure this one and get it in the back of the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission pickup. He would meet with the trapper later and hand over the two reptiles.

As always, McDaniel approached with care. He hadn't been fooling with alligators for close to 20 years for nothing. He carried tape to wrap the powerful jaws shut.

McDaniel remembers that day.

"I went up to him, grabbed his jaws and held them together while I wrapped them with duct tape. But on the second loop, he jerked and the tape didn't hold too good. I went back to the truck for another piece.

"When I went up to him with the extra tape, he lunged for me and the tape popped. He grabbed my left hand and I guess I was lucky. Since he was next to the fence, he couldn't roll and really use the full force of his jaws.

"I finally got him to let go of my hand and he grabbed my right leg. The teeth didn't break through my trouser leg, though."

McDaniel was able to break free and went to get his gun out of the truck. Although it was not then Commission policy to kill an alligator when answering a complaint, he didn't want to take any more chances. Despite the fact that he is left-handed, he was able to use his uninjured right hand and dispatch the angry alligator. And, somehow, he was also able

to load the carcass into the truck, drive to the rendezvous with the trapper and then to the emergency room.

After waiting two hours in the emergency room, he was sent to an orthopedic surgeon's office. There the wounds were cleaned and his hand X-rayed. One of the alligator's teeth had gone through the bone of his left index finger and there was a fracture below the joint. His finger and the wounds to his leg were cleaned with sterile saline. After the fracture was set, he went home.

But the saga doesn't end there. Within 24 hours, McDaniel returned to the doctor, complaining of swelling and a foul smell coming from the wound. Within two days, he was admitted to the hospital and the possibility of amputation was facing him.

What caused the problem? When the alligator's tooth went through the bone of the biologist's finger, it carried with it bacteria that is rarely found in humans, *Aeromonas hydrophila*. This bacteria set off an infection which resulted in McDaniel undergoing surgery and a 15-day hospital stay. They saved his finger, but the joint fused and he no longer has full use of it.

With the increase in the number of alligator complaints statewide and the subsequent increase in the people/alligator conflicts, more attention is being focused lately on alligators. While much of it is generated to reducing the possibility of conflict, the medical community is taking a different look.

In the February 1983 issue of *The Journal of the Florida Medical Association*, four physicians pub-

lished a paper titled "Alligator Bites and Related Infections." In it, they describe their experiences with two individuals who suffered alligator attacks. In both instances, not only did the two suffer severe lacerations and even fractures, but also serious infections from *Aeromonas hydrophila*.

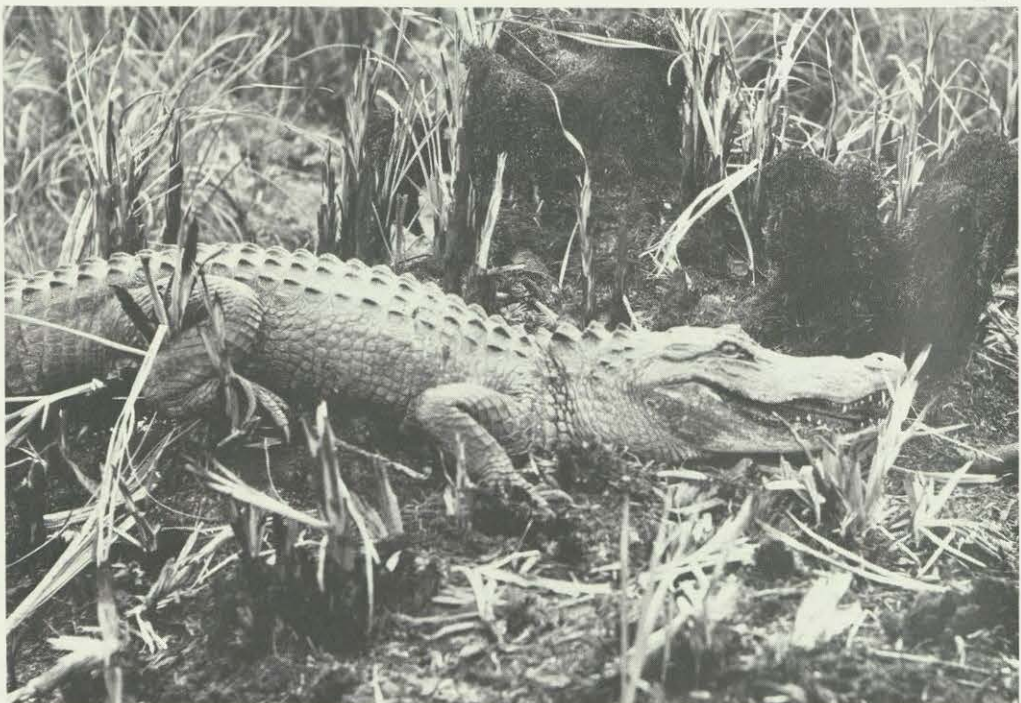
According to the article, the bacteria is not uncommon in alligators, given their environment. In fact, infections from it are quite commonplace among fish and amphibians, but not so in humans. It was blamed for several severe infections among passengers of a commercial jet which crashed in the Everglades. The physicians caution all doctors to be aware of the possibility of an infection from it whenever an injury is suffered in Florida waters.

Although the infection can be serious and even fatal, in both cases reported on in the *Journal* as well as in McDaniel's case, treatment with antibiotics was successful. The doctors do advise that the antibiotics used differ from those used to treat other infections.

With the amount of contact that Commission employees have with alligators, it is surprising that there have been so few serious injuries. In fact, McDaniel admits his, although it first seemed relatively minor, is the only major one of which he is aware.

Ever since that fateful day, McDaniel has been not only spreading the gospel of how to avoid alligator attacks, but also emphasizing the potential for infection. His advice: If you are bitten by an alligator, don't delay. See your physician immediately and be sure he is aware of *Aeromonas hydrophila*. □

Mike Fogarty





Hunter Education News

No Guarantees

In these days of consumer protection, many of the products, goods and services purchased by the public come with owner's guides, operating manuals, guarantees and warranties. Some companies have bent over backward to instruct consumers in the proper use of their products and, in some cases, assume liability when it can be proven the products are defective, hazardous, or flawed.

Contrary to what some people may think, a Florida hunting license does not come with any built-in guarantees or exceptional rights for the purchaser. In fact, hunting in Florida is a privilege, not a right to be assumed. It is a privilege to be earned.

A step to "earning" a license is to enroll in and successfully complete a basic hunter education course. The course provides practical information for prospective hunters, introducing first-time hunters to the principles of wildlife management, safe handling of hunting equipment, outdoor safety, Florida game laws, game identification, and hunter ethics and responsibility.

The hunter education course does not magically transform its students into expert hunters, super marksmen or super sportsmen and women. That takes experience, practice and dedication to the sport, which can only come from the individual. The responsibility for understanding and putting into practice what is learned rests squarely on the shoulders of the individual student.

After a license is purchased, there are no guarantees the hunter will be successful or be able to take game which is up to his or her expectations in terms of number, size or physical condition. Furthermore, the license itself is not a free pass to use other folks' land as a hunting ground. That depends on the goodwill established and maintained between the hunter and the landowner.

Once a hunter is licensed, there is no warranty for being able to hunt in the future. The rules of the hunt can change in terms of limits, seasons and species available to the hunter. Sometimes this results in limiting hunters' opportunities and sometimes it means an improvement in the hunting experience.

The hunter is in a position of continuing to earn the privilege of hunting by becoming involved in

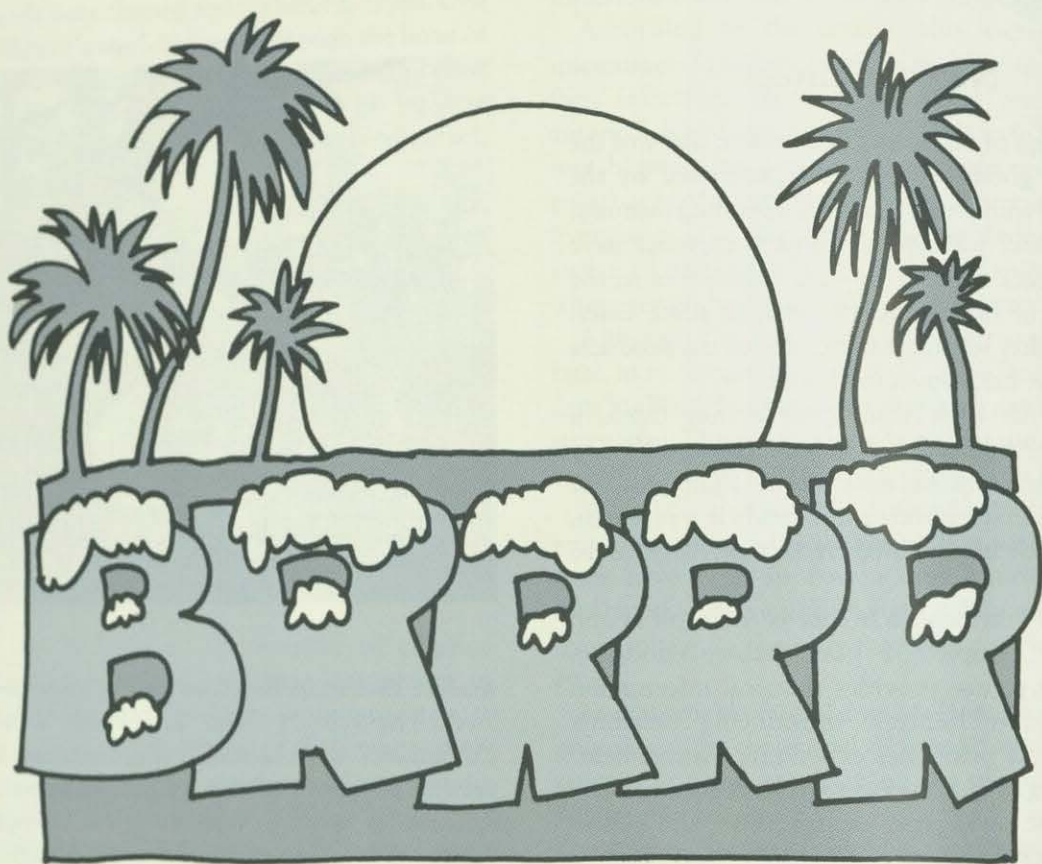


wildlife management issues on the state and local level. The Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission and the state's sportsmen are in partnership on behalf of our wildlife resources. Management of wildlife depends upon biological research, public education and sound decisions, in addition to the cooperation and support of the hunter. The Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission actively solicits information and opinions, values hunter cooperation, and listens to the words as well as the actions of hunters.

By becoming involved in public hearings, the legislative process, and volunteer projects in education or habitat improvement, the hunter will have a positive influence on wildlife itself and on the future of hunting in Florida.

Hunting is a special sport. It is more than a recreation. The hunter takes on a special responsibility whenever he or she picks up a firearm or bow, purchases a hunting license and goes afield. The Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission tries to meet the hunter halfway by providing professional, technical expertise in wildlife management and law enforcement, and by providing basic educational opportunities for the hunter.

A hunting license may not come with guarantees, but it does come with opportunities to experience the satisfactions and pleasures of being afield and being a positive influence on behalf of our state's wildlife resources. □



Art by Sam Westbrook

Southern Cold

By Biff Lampton

Along about mid-summer, when the heat waves radiate from the red clay banks, the oaks are tired and dusty, and the local swimming hole muddy from overuse, it pays to remember the times you've been cold.

I have been cold. And all the times I've been cold have been in the South where tourists come during the winter to defrost.

Cold down here is wet and nasty, not the pretty, white cold you'll find north of the Mason-Dixon Line. But there are two kinds of cold.

The first is self-inflicted cold. Duck hunters and airboaters are insane enough to chill themselves regularly and most folks will agree they get what they deserve.

The second kind is more insidious. It's the cold that catches you off guard because somebody has forgotten to warn you about it and thinks it's funny to watch your nose get all red and runny.

I have watched layers of frost form on my shotgun barrel along Fisheating Creek near Lake Okeechobee, felt my pants legs freeze solid in the Fakahatchee Strand of Collier County, and photographed snow in Miami.

None of these colds can hold a candle to the St. Vincent Island brand. St. Vincent is a federal wildlife refuge located just offshore of Apalachicola and is run by a fellow named Martin Perry.

Now Martin is a real nice guy, but somewhere in his makeup is a streak of mischief. I firmly believe he sets the dates for St. Vincent's muzzleloading gun hunts after first consulting the sages of long-range weather forecasting.

A couple of years back a bunch of us traveled to Vincent for the hunt. As we crossed Indian Pass to set up camp on the island, it turned cold.

Cold on Vincent is when the Apalachicola Bay oyster you've just shucked freezes before you can swallow it. Cold on Vincent is six guys huddled in one tent as close together as they can manage without people talking

about them. Cold on Vincent is when the campfire turns blue and waits for spring.

But Martin isn't satisfied with just a dose of cold. For his ace in the hole, he throws in hot. On the first morning of the hunt, nimrods bundled up in every stitch they owned. By noon the temperature was 95° in the shade.

Folks were shedding clothes like the place had suddenly become a nudist camp. You could track a buckskinner cross country just by following the discarded long johns. The average sportsman that day was more aromatic than pre-packaged catfish bait.

That afternoon it got cold again. The mercury plunged to a new record low and the woods were full of hunters scurrying about, hunting anything warm previously discarded. I understand not many deer died as a result of gunshot but several succumbed from acute attacks of giggles.

Upon reflection, I think the coldest I have ever been without relief in sight was because of Sparkplug, an ex-hunting companion. They hunt geese from pits dug in fields along the Mississippi River, locating the holes hopefully below the route the geese fly from water to field.

"Come on over," Sparkplug urged one day. "The weather is downright miserable, the blues and snows are thick, and I'll guarantee roast goose providing you can shoot straight."

An offer like that is hard to refuse, even from a known huckster like Sparkplug, so I hurried to the clubhouse, armored against anything Old Man Winter could toss my way. Except hip boots. Everybody

else had hip boots. Insulated hip boots.

"What about hip boots?" I asked Sparkplug.

"Don't worry 'bout them," he replied. "They're just to keep the wind off."

I followed him to a pit and waited while he climbed inside. It was still dark but I listened as he walked around in the hole. There was no sound of water, no splashing, though he had donned his insulated hip boots.

"Now what're you standin' there fer?" he demanded. "Get down in this hole 'fore the goose comes."

Still leery, I climbed inside. The ice wasn't quite thick enough to support our combined weight. Now I know how an olive feels when it's mixed with gin and vermouth on the rocks.

That's cold. Let us seek our blessings this summer. □



Art by Sam Westbrook

CONSERVATION SCENE

Meet Your Commissioner

Citing a concern that his grandchildren have the opportunity to hunt and fish as he has had, Pensacola banker Jim Baroco looks forward eagerly to his tenure as a member of the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission.

Baroco, 65, was appointed April 28, 1983 to the board by Governor Bob Graham. He replaces W.D. Baxter of Marianna and is the first Pensacolan to serve on the board.

He was sworn in at the May 13 meeting of the Commission in Tallahassee, one which also saw a standing room only crowd speak on the proposed ban on hunting on road rights-of-way.

Perhaps with this meeting still strong in his mind, Baroco talked with *Florida Wildlife* and voiced his concerns about the future of hunting in this state.

"I would like very much to see relations improve between landowners and sportsmen, particularly hunters," Baroco said. "Until they do, hunters will only be hurting themselves. Florida is one of the fastest growing states and we are steadily losing hunting opportunities.

"I would like to see more lands being leased or purchased, if possible. That is going to be one of my priorities, more and better hunting opportunities for the entire state."

Baroco described himself as an "avid hunter and fisherman." He enjoys deer and turkey hunting as well as pursuit of bass and bream.



William Greer

The newest Commissioner comes to the board after serving 7½ years on the Board of Business and Professional Regulation and admits the subjects the Commission deals with "are dear to my heart."

He has been chairman of the board and chief executive officer of the West Florida Bank in Pensacola since 1976. He founded a Pensacola electrical construction company and has been involved in land development in south Florida and in west Florida and Alabama.

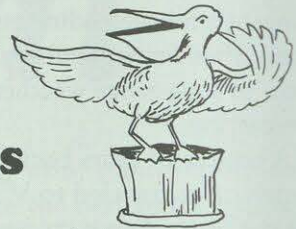
He is the father of four children and is active in civic and community organizations in Pensacola.

"I am very glad to be on the Commission and to represent the people of this state," he said.

This One Was Stocked

Further investigation regarding a 17-pound, 9-ounce largemouth bass recently caught in Hurricane Lake, Okaloosa County, has revealed some interesting facts. This 27-inch lunker, caught March 19, 1983, was 11 years old, based on examination of the otoliths (bony structure of the inner ear). The fish, a Florida subspecies of largemouth bass, was stocked from Richloam Fish Hatchery in April 1972, at one and one-half to two inches in length as part of the original stocking of this reservoir. In most newly flooded reservoirs, ideal growing conditions exist for at least the first few years as evidenced by this catch and our other known trophy catches occurring this spring.

Noisy Pelican Problems



A Broward County man called the West Palm Beach office recently to complain about a pelican in his back yard. He said the bird had a broken wing and was raising a ruckus with its thrashing and calls. While the dispatcher was trying to hunt up an officer to go and get the bird, the man called back again. This time he was really irate. Seems the Broward County Sheriff's Department had arrived and issued him a citation for having a pelican that was disturbing the peace!

Tagging Catfish

Catfish are the most important commercial freshwater fishes harvested in Florida. Five to 10 million pounds are harvested annually and are valued at two to four million dollars. Since the St. Johns River produces approximately 40 percent of the statewide catfish landings, an effort is being made to learn more about the St. Johns fishery. As an initial step, 3,000 catfish from various places along the river are to be tagged and released. Cooperation from local commercial fishermen is being solicited to ensure success of the program.

You Read It Here First

A first place award for the top newspaper column of the year has been awarded by the Florida Outdoor Writers Association to Commission employee Burke F. "Biff" Lampton. Readers of *Florida Wildlife* will recognize the name of this frequent contributor who, incidentally, has two articles in this issue. Lampton is education officer supervisor working out of the Commission's West Palm Beach office. The piece that won the award appeared as a guest column in the Miami Herald last year during the Everglades deer

hunt controversy. It was first published as a feature in the November-December 1980 issue of *Florida Wildlife*.



Eat More Possum

Gene Smith

It started as a bumper sticker gag, that exhortation to "Eat More Possum." For the nutrition conscious, however, it's no laughing matter. According to a recent publication from the Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, opossum meat is lower in calories and fat, and higher in protein than selected cuts of pork, beef and lamb.

This, and some other interesting facts are revealed in the table of comparative food values compiled by the Georgia Cooperative Extension Service.

GAME AND DOMESTIC MEATS COMPOSITION,
100 GRAM EDIBLE PORTION

Food and Description	Water Percent	Food Energy Calories	Protein grams	Fat grams
Beef: choice grade, trimmed, raw	56.7	301	17.4	25.1
Pork: composite of trimmed lean meat, medium fat class, raw	56.3	308	15.7	26.7
Lamb: choice grade, trimmed raw	61.0	263	16.5	21.3
Beaver: cooked, roasted	56.2	248	29.2	13.7
Rabbit: raw	73.0	135	21.0	5.0
Raccoon: cooked, roasted	54.8	255	29.2	14.5
Muskrat: cooked, roasted	67.3	153	27.2	4.1
Opossum: cooked, roasted	57.3	221	30.2	10.2
Venison: lean meat, raw	74	126	21.0	4.0
Chicken: fryers total edible, raw	75.7	124	18.6	4.9
Duck, domestic: total edible, raw	54.3	326	16.0	28.6
Duck, wild: total edible, raw	61.1	233	21.1	15.8
Pheasant: total edible, raw	69.2	151	24.3	5.2
Quail: total edible, raw	56.9	168	25.0	6.8
Catfish: raw	78.0	103	17.6	3.1
Largemouth bass: raw	77.3	104	18.9	2.6
Frog legs	81.9	73	16.4	.3
Crayfish	82.5	72	14.6	.5



Field Notes

■ Thanks to the generosity of Colorado's Division of Wildlife, the Commission received three million walleye fry recently. The unexpected gift resulted from overproduction at Colorado hatcheries and could be the salvation of the Florida experimental work. Operational difficulties in Kansas and Nebraska, with whom arrangements had been made previously, had made prospects seem dim for additional walleye work this spring. The fry will be grown out to fingerling stocking size at Blackwater and Richloam fish hatcheries and should be ready for lake stocking in June.

■ Updates on quail and turkey research were the highlights of Tall Timbers Research Station's annual seminar recently held in Thomasville.

The wild turkey expert on the program was Dr. Dan Speaks, Auburn University. Among other things, he reported that turkeys prefer mixed habitats, that about 45 percent of their nests are subjected to predation, and that raccoons, wild dogs, opossums and crows are the most important predators, in that order. He also said that his studies have found that 71.3 percent of all turkey poults are lost to predators in the first two weeks of their lives.

Wildlife Alert Report

■ Arrest warrants were recently served on three Lake City men charged in the killing of two tame deer in January at a local kindergarten. The men shot the doe and yearling at night in the kindergarten's petting zoo. A Wildlife Alert report aided in this lengthy investigation. The men were each placed under \$5,000 bond for illegally taking deer and for armed trespass.

REPORT WILDLIFE LAW VIOLATORS...
WILDLIFE ALERT!
THEY ARE STEALING FROM YOU!

■ In Charlotte County, two individuals, acting on orders from their employer, cut down a tree in which there was an active bald eagle's nest. This was done as part of the employer's plan to develop his property. A Wildlife Alert call led to the apprehension of the three individuals. The property owner was fined \$1,000, sentenced to serve one year probation and to perform 80 hours of public service; his two employees were each fined \$300, sentenced to one year probation and 80 hours of public service.

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Floridana



Props kill manatees

The Cry of The Manatee

*I'm a manatee you see,
I have only one enemy.
Animals? Oh no,
People are my foe.
They ride around in motor boats
and skin my back.
Compassion is what they lack.
After that, they ride around
And leave me
Death Bound!!*

—Amy Falconetti, age 11, Rock Lake Middle School, Longwood

